DEMOCRATIC PALESTINE

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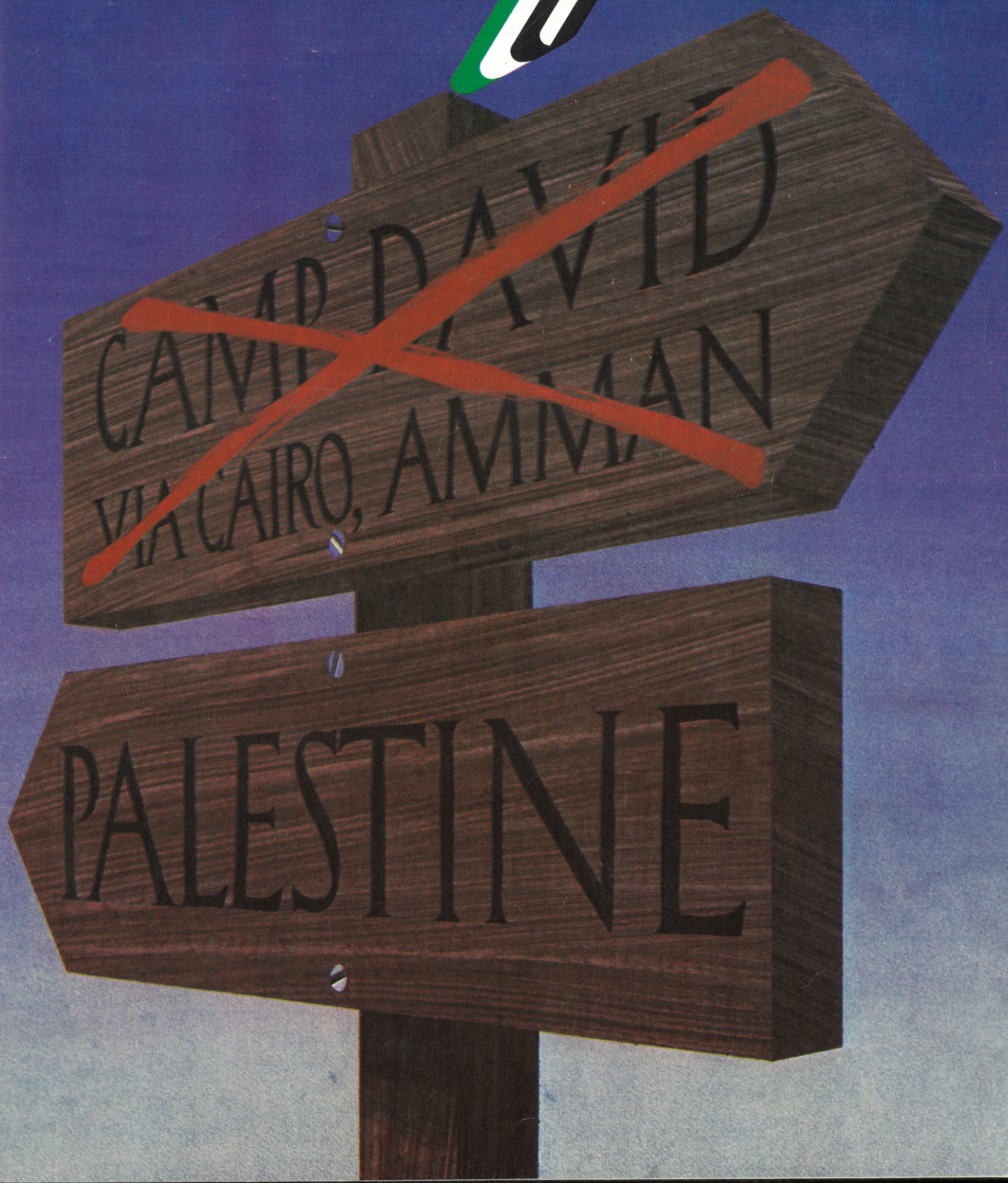

PFLP 16th Anniversary

The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine is a Marxist - Leninist organization and an integral component of the Palestine Liberation Organization. A primary motive for establishing the PFLP was to inject a clear class perspective in the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Experience shows that the most oppressed classes - the workers, peasants, sectors of the petit bourgeoisie, the camp Palestinians - are those most in contradiction with imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction. It is they who carve history with determination that can persevere in a protracted war against the enemy alliance.

The PFLP is deeply commited to the unity and independent, national decision - making of the Palestinian people and their sole, legitimate representative, the PLO. To this end, we work for strengthening the role of the Palestinian left, thereby accentuating the PLO's anti-imperialist line in common struggle with the Arab national liberation movement.

The process of liberating Palestine relies on radical, national democratic change or development in one or more of the surrounding Arab countries. This will provide the PLO with a strong base for liberating Palestine. Thus, the struggle for a democratic Palestine is linked to the creation of a united, democratic, and ultimately socialist, Arab society. This will provide the objective basis for eradicating the poverty, exploitation, oppression and the problem of minorities, from which the people of the area suffer.

As a cornerstone in this process, the establishment of a democratic, secular state in Palestine will provide a democratic solution for the Jewish question in this area, while simultaneously restoring the national rights of the Palestinian people. After liberation, Jews in Palestine, like all citizens, will enjoy equal rights and duties. The decision of the PLO to establish an independent Palestinian state on any liberated part of the national soil is a step in this direction. It is the sincere hope of all Palestinian revolutionaries that more and more Israelis will recognize that they too have become victims of Zionism's racism, expansionism, exploitation and militarism, and will join us in the struggle for a democratic Palestine.

Democratic Palestine is an English language magazine published by the PFLP. It replaces the *PFLP Bulletin*, which was published monthly from March 1979 until the 1982 Zionist invasion of Lebanon (issues no. 25-62) and bimonthly through November 1983 (no. 63-69).

By changing the name we wish to signal our intent to engage a broader section of progressive forces around the world in dialogue and relations of mutual solidarity that will strengthen the struggle for a democratic Palestine in the context of the global struggle against imperialism and its allies.

Democratic Palestine is published with the following aims:

— conveying the political line of the PFLP and other progressive Palestinian and Arab forces

— providing current information and analysis pertinent to the Palestinian liberation struggle, as well as developments on the Arab and international levels

— serving as a forum and instrument for building relations of mutual solidarity between the Palestinian revolution and progressive organizations, parties, national liberation movements and countries around the world.

You can support these aims by subscribing to *Democratic Palestine*. Furthermore, we hope that you will encourage friends and comrades to read and subscribe to *Democratic Palestine*. We also urge you to send us comments, criticisms and proposals concerning the magazine's contents.

The subscription fee for 12 issues is US$24. If you wish to subscribe, please fill out the form below and mail to: *Democratic Palestine*, Box 12144, Damascus, Syria.

At the same time, please send the fee by check, money order or your bank to account no. 010-41-006222-06, Bank of Cyprus, Central Office, Nicosia, Cyprus.

Readers of the *PFLP Bulletin* who have confirmed their address with us will automatically receive *Democratic Palestine*. We now ask you to send the subscription fee as soon as possible.

Those who have received *PFLP Bulletin* in the past, but have not confirmed their address, should do so immediately and send the subscription fee in order to receive *Democratic Palestine*.

We are eager to exchange *Democratic Palestine* with other publications on the Middle East and/or anti-imperialist issues in general. Please send your publication to our post box, and you will automatically receive *Democratic Palestine*. Exchange agreements established for the *PFLP Bulletin* will continue to be honored.

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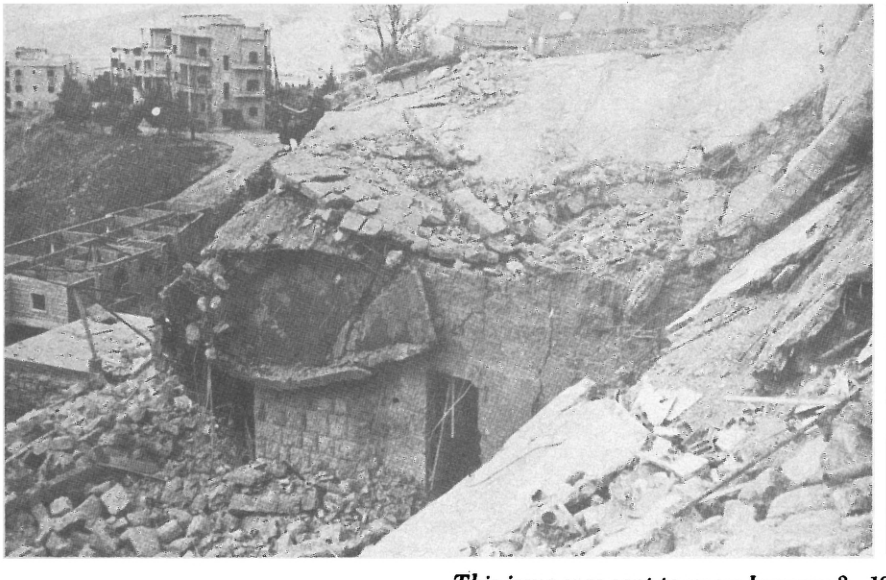
Jerusalem, Nov. 18: Over 3000 marched in the funeral procession of Comrade Ishaq Musa Maraghi, who died in Beer Sheba prison while serving a 20 year sentence for membership in the PFLP. His martyrdom was blamed on the prison authorities' deliberate negligence concerning health care.



As we go to press, Israeli planes have again attacked Baalbeck. Casualty estimates are running at 100 dead and 400 injured.

This issue was sent to press January 3, 1984.

Editorial

The Arafat-Mubarak meeting, which took place on December 22nd in Cairo, raised varying and controversial reactions all over the world. Some circles cheered loudly, while others condemned the meeting and rejected any probable results beforehand.

The United States administration expressed support for the meeting, as did west European officials. The pro-US circles in the Arab world applauded the Cairo meeting. Such stands are substantial indications of the nature of this meeting. Yet the Palestinian response remains as the most important. It is the sum of the Palestinian reaction which will decide what the Cairo meeting will lead to.

Dr. George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, condemned Yasir Arafat's meeting with Mubarak, defining it as "a step into the Camp David agreements". He called for Arafat's immediate resignation from his post of Chairman of the PLO Executive Committee, because of this dangerous deviation from the decisions of the Palestinian National Council. Furthermore, Comrade Habash urged all Palestinian resistance organizations, all mass organizations and all PNC members to work together in order to oust Arafat.

Condemnation of Arafat's step has come from a broad spectrum of Palestinian patriotic personalities, resistance organizations, trade unions, mass organizations and PNC members. (See following pages for examples.) It is now clear that the overwhelming majority of Palestinians condemn this step and reject its consequences.

Why this meeting?

The Cairo meeting, which took place directly after the departure of Arafat and his troops from Tripoli, was no mere ceremony. Nor did either party enter into it spontaneously or naively. Rather it is a clear expression of the political line of rightist circles within the Palestinian nationalist bourgeoisie; it is an indicator of the future path chosen by influential rightists in the PLO, and a result of Arab reaction's cultivation of this trend.

Arafat's visit to Cairo was an announcement that he has decided to yield to US pressure, to accept the Reagan plan and give a mandate to King Hussein of Jordan to negotiate the future of the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Such a political line was rejected by the PNC at its 16th session held in Algiers, in February 1983. The PNC explicitly rejected the Reagan plan because it denies the Palestinian people their right to self-determination and to establish an independent state, and, moreover, because it ignores the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. In other words: Reagan's plan aims to liquidate the Palestinian national struggle and cause. It is a supplement to the Camp David accords signed by Sadat in 1979. These accords were the result of Sadat's capitulation to the US-Israeli conditions. Capitalizing on the results of the 1967 war, which led to the occupation of the Sinai, Golan Heights, Gaza Strip and West Bank, the US and 'Israel' planned for liquidating the Arab national liberation movement in order to totally dominate the area. The Camp David accords were the first revenues collected by the US and 'Israel'. However, this agreement remained confined to the Egyptian front, contrary to the expectations of Sadat, Begin and Carter. This was due to the steadfast stand taken by Syria, the PLO, Algeria, Democratic Yemen and Libya. They decided to counteract Sadat's capitulationist step and managed to isolate it at the Baghdad Summit. Continuing Palestinian resistance in the occupied land and in common struggle with the Lebanese national forces blocked Camp David on the Palestinian level.

The US and 'Israel' had provided for 'resolving' the Palestinian issue through an annex to the Camp David accords, calling for "administrative self-rule" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, under Israeli or Jordanian auspices. Such a solution would obviously mean liquidation of the Palestinian cause, but it was moreover planned as the bridge for spreading Camp David in the rest of the area. With the Palestinian people united behind the PLO, the US and 'Israel' planned the invasion of Lebanon. The goal, as expressed by Shamir on June 8, 1982, was to "destroy the PLO which is the obstacle preventing the peace process to go on in the region."

On September 1st, Reagan came up with his proposals, once again seeking to use liquidation of the Palestinian issue as the bridge to the rest of the area. Based on the idea that the PLO had been greatly weakened and was thus in no position to confront the Camp David trend, the proposals had the same contents.

The rightist circles in the PLO started to push for the adoption of these proposals. However, this political line was checked by the democratic struggle that took place in the 16th PNC session. Yet the rightists in the PLO's Executive Committee, led by Arafat, didn't commit themselves to the decisions of the PNC. They kept their contacts with King Hussein and the Egyptian regime, trying to find a way of getting around these decisions.

The siege of Tripoli and of the Palestinian camps in this area elicited Palestinian and Arab sympathy for Arafat as Chairman of the PLO. This provided Arafat with the opportune moment to divert from the political line adopted at the PNC. He did it. He payed that visit to Al Quba palace, where he discussed with Mubarak their joint plan. Thus, Arafat breached the moral and political contract he had signed with the other Palestinian organizations. He deviated from the political line decided by the representatives of the Palestinian people. Above all, Arafat stabbed the Palestinian national struggle and cause in the back by yielding to the US, Israeli and Arab reactionary conditions. His visit was an announcement that he had given up the aims for which our people have given great sacrifices in the past eighteen years. Organizationally speaking, this step by Arafat is illegal to the point of depriving him of legitimacy as Chairman of the PLO's Executive Committee.

This situation puts new demands on the political struggle of the democratic forces within the PLO, to combat this deviation. The democratic forces are now mobilizing the broadest possible sectors of the Palestinian people against Arafat's step, with the following aims:

1. To preempt any probable results of this visit.
2. To take the necessary organizational measures against Arafat, namely to oust him from his post.

The Palestinian people will continue their struggle with the same zeal and patience. Based on long experience, they know that long-term struggle against imperialism and Zionism is the only way to fulfill their national rights and goals. ●

Joint Communique:

PFLP-DFLP Joint Leadership, Palestinian Liberation Front, Palestinian Communist Party

December 25, 1983

Arafat's visit to Egypt is a qualitative step on the path of dealing with US schemes, which are based on the Camp David agreements, as well as the Reagan plan. Consequently, US, Arab and Palestinian reactionary circles quickly embraced this step; they moved to transform it into a complete sell-out by calling for a speedy resumption of the autonomy talks between Egypt and Israel, and an agreement allowing the Jordanian regime to represent the Palestinian people in order to reach a capitulationist settlement...

This step is very dangerous because it aims directly at developing splits in the Palestinian ranks and in the PLO, whereby a Palestinian force would follow the path of capitulation, armed with the legitimacy of his PLO position and taking advantage of the conditions suffered by our people recently, i.e., the problems in Fatah and the internal armed conflict...The recent calls for establishing a government-in-exile confirm this rightist direction...

The Palestinian right justifies the march to surrender as being the only alternative in the present conditions, capitalizing on the pessimism that arose due to the internal strife, which we warned of and condemned.

Regardless of what has happened, we are more than ever determined to face this rightist trend and obstruct this course which is being forced on our people. In this, we are armed with our principled positions and the will of the majority of our people and their nationalist forces that have struggled against the Camp David accords, autonomy and civil administration for the past seven years, and against the Reagan plan and all attempts to mandate the Jordanian regime...

Our people's cause and gains are in danger. We are at a crossroads which will determine whether our national cause will be liquidated with the participation of Palestinian renegades, or whether our march will continue to achieve the right to return, self-determination and the establishment of an independent state...We have no choice but to unite all our nationalist forces and organizations, especially Fatah, because of its historical role in our people's struggle...We call for the creation of a broad Palestinian national front of all honest forces struggling for the liberation of our homeland. We call for setting aside all differences and obstacles to the unity of the forces that have condemned this capitulationist step and are struggling so that it will not affect our people's struggle.

We call for protecting the PLO and its sole representation of our people, and for the exclusion of this capitulationist trend, so that it cannot speak on behalf of our people's future...We refuse legitimacy being used to contradict our national political line. In this manner, we will be able to solidify the PLO's position in order to fight the imperialists, Zionists and other enemies.

The four organizations see it necessary to work on the following basis:

1. To prepare for a major conference including a broad array of Palestinians who have condemned Arafat's step. In the present circumstances, we see the PLO's Central Council as the only body which includes these forces and has the right to make legitimate decisions against this step and whoever took this step.

2. We call on Fatah's Central Committee to advance its position against Arafat's visit to Egypt, facilitating the meeting of the PLO's Central Council in order to take the necessary steps to halt this trend. Such a position would aid in protecting the unity of the PLO, Fatah's role herein, and our people's national cause.

3. We call on all Palestinian nationalist forces to declare that Arafat, with his current policy, has lost legitimacy and is disqualified to lead the PLO and our people's struggle.

4. We call on the Palestinian people, and all members of the Palestinian National Council, Central Council, Executive Committee, and mass organizations to voice their opposition to this policy of surrender, so that we can paralyze the reactionary positions...

5. To our people in the occupied territories, all nationalist forces, mass organizations, associations and municipalities, which held their national convention in Jerusalem in 1978, in order to condemn Sadat's scheme: We call on you to unite your ranks and struggle against this new conspiracy which aims at rejuvenating Camp David, autonomy and the Reagan plan.

6. We call on all nationalist and progressive Arab forces to voice their solidarity with the PLO's nationalist line against the trend of surrender...In order to counter this capitulationist course which threatens all the area, we call for resolving all differences between nationalist Arab regimes and Palestinian nationalist forces, specifically between Syria and Fatah's Central Committee. The danger to the area has increased with the signing of the US-Israeli strategic alliance agreement which aims to find an opening in order to encircle the progressive forces, divide their ranks and reduce their fighting capacity.

The danger that threatens our cause can be defeated, but a primary prerequisite is total unity among all Palestinian and Arab nationalist forces, steering clear of secondary differences and relying on the will of our people and the struggle capacity of the Arab masses... ●

excerpted

Condemn the Arafat-Mubarak Meeting!

Palestinian Response

Below are samples of the initial Palestinian response to Yasir Arafat's Dec. 22nd meeting with Husni Mubarak:

From Occupied Palestine

Ahmad Shawki,
mayor of Jenin

"We must adhere to the main objective, the liberation of our land and our legitimate rights in an independent state. Any action that contradicts this objective and violates the PNC's decisions is unacceptable... Our people, while affirming commitment to national unity and the legitimate institutions of the PLO, condemn Brother Arafat's visit to Cairo and his meeting with Mubarak, since that contradicts the collective position of the Palestinian leadership and the point of view of our people inside and outside the occupied territories. We paid and are still paying the price of Camp David."

Karim Khalaf,
elected mayor of Ramallah

"...We are confident that the PLO Executive Committee, the other legitimate bodies and Fatah's leadership will shoulder the national responsibility of confronting this infamous violation."

Hilmi Hanoun,
mayor of Tulkarem

"Arafat's visit to Cairo was not a surprise. It seems that he prepared for it beforehand. Here, we gave our trust to the PLO institutions and legitimate leadership. Arafat committed a mistake by acting singlehandedly..."

Ibrahim Tawil,
mayor of El Bireh

"...The meeting with Mubarak contradicts the PNC decisions and damages the national cause. We are confident that the Palestinian leadership will cooperate to confront the resulting dangers, taking steps to guarantee the return of democratic life to the institutions of the PLO, while at the same time guaranteeing its unity."

Haidar Abdel Shafi,
head of the Palestinian Red Crescent in Gaza

"It definitely brings sorrow and discontent for it departs from the PNC resolutions and the principled position of the PLO and the Palestinian people, which stresses non-cooperation with any position or regime that doesn't correspond with the basic rights of our people..."

Wahid Hamadallah,
mayor of Anabta

"We don't support Arafat's visit to Cairo because it contradicts the PNC

Revolution until Victory

decisions and damages national unity. We call on the Palestinian leadership to deal with this visit with wisdom and courage in order to contain its damaging results...We in the occupied territories need, more than ever, your unity, tenacity, strength and democracy. What has happened should be dealt with on this basis."

Mass associations and unions

The heads of the following made statements emphasizing that Arafat's visit is in violation of PNC resolutions and Palestinian collective leadership and consensus. Several noted that this was a step towards capitulation and could give the impression that the Palestinians supported Camp David.

National Union of Palestinian Women in Gaza
National Collective of Secondary Students in Gaza
Lawyers Guild in the West Bank
Dentists Union in the West Bank
Engineers Union in the West Bank
Workers Union in the West Bank
Al Makased Society, Jerusalem
Society to Revitalize the Family, El Bireh

Eight mass organizations and unions in Ramallah and 24 in Bethlehem signed statements condemning the visit and furthermore calling on the PLO and Fatah's leadership to deprive Arafat of all his posts in the PLO and the Palestinian revolution.

General Unions

The following issued statements condemning Arafat's visit as a dangerous, individualistic step which renounced the PNC's resolutions. They viewed it as an unsuccessful attempt to impose the Camp David accords on the Palestinian question.

General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists
General Union of Palestinian Women
General Union of Palestinian Students
General Union of Palestinian Teachers
General Union of Palestinian Peasants

PNC Members in Jordan

On Dec. 23rd, 38 members of the Palestinian National Council, residing in Jordan, issued a statement (summarized below) condemning Arafat's visit to Egypt.

We, PNC members in Jordan, were aghast to hear of the individualistic step taken by brother Yasir Arafat - his visit to Cairo and meeting with Husni Mubarak, the heir of Sadat who betrayed the Palestinian national cause by signing the capitulationist agreement with the Israeli enemy, and sunk Egypt into the quagmire of subordination to US imperialism. We vigorously condemn this step, as it is alien to Palestinian legitimacy.

This visit and meeting is an extension of the path of individualism and in violation of the decisions of the PNC and the PLO's legitimate bodies. It causes grave damage to the PLO's unity and independent decision, and offers a free credit to the Camp David accords.

We firmly defend the unity of the PLO and its legal bodies, and resist all attempts to bypass the PLO as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; we resist all forms of interference in its internal affairs and all attempts to contain its independent decision. At the same time, we affirm our determination to continue the struggle to protect Palestinian legitimacy from the dangers of individualism, surrender and division...

We urge all the groups of the revolution, the Palestinian masses and all progressive and nationalist forces and personalities, inside and outside the occupied homeland, to unite their ranks in order to defend the PLO and the gains of our people, achieved through the revolution and the Palestinian gun, in order to deter the opportunity of those forces opposed to our people's rights...and abort the enemy's plan which aims to drag the PLO into the quagmire of the capitulationist US solutions and their reactionary supplements, first and foremost the Reagan plan.

PNC Members in Syria

On Jan. 3rd, PLO Executive Committee member Abu Maher Al Yamani issued the following statement:

The PNC members present in Syria met in the PLO office in Damascus to study the dimensions of Yasir Arafat's meeting with Husni Mubarak and the dangers it could lead to. This step departs from the PLO's national legitimacy, abandons the Palestinian cause, and violates the Palestinian National Charter and PNC decisions. This deprives Arafat of all legitimacy in the PLO... ●

PFLP Press Conference

On December 24th, the PFLP held a press conference where Comrade George Habash, General Secretary, addressed a large group of journalists concerning Arafat's visit to Cairo.

How do you describe Mr. Arafat today?

From the formal point of view, he is still the Chairman of the PLO's Executive Committee. But after this dangerous step, I must say he will not be defined as such; he will not be the Chairman of the PLO's Executive Committee...Regardless of this legal point, Arafat, in the eyes of the masses, no longer represents their aims or the aims of the Palestinian revolution. He has become the Palestinian Sadat. I am sure that our masses will take the same position towards Arafat as they did towards Sadat.

In light of your position that Arafat has disqualified himself as Chairman of the PLO, who will handle the affairs of the PLO?

Of course, we are facing this problem, but only temporarily. Now those Executive Committee members who condemn this step should discuss how to continue the work of the PLO. Moreover, there is the chairman who is elected not by the Executive Committee, but by the Palestinian National Council: Khaled Fahoum. We hold him responsible for filling the gap until this problem is solved.

Besides, I would like to distinguish between the constitutional gap and a gap in the revolutionary work. Concerning the constitutional gap, the problem is a real one. On the other hand, there is no gap concerning the revolutionary work. Our guns will continue to be directed against the imperialist-Zionist enemy. We are aware that our struggle must increase, especially at this moment, against this enemy. Added to that is our political struggle and work among the

masses. This is the opportunity to raise the consciousness of our masses concerning this step. In this way, we can assess the revolution the political, military, financial, and behavioral mistakes - and build the revolution on a new, solid basis, better than before. We in the PFLP believe that this is the time to radicalize the revolution and build national unity on a new basis, free of all the mistakes committed in the Palestinian arena.

In the case that the number of those in the PLO who oppose Arafat does not exceed those supporting him, then he will still represent legitimacy. What would be your attitude in this case?

This is an important issue. Now that Arafat has taken such a step-not only dangerous, but also extremely individualistic, I doubt that the majority of the Executive Committee will cooperate will him. But let us suppose we face this problem; the answer will lie with our masses...They didn't revolt for 18 years and make sacrifices in order to end the revolution on the basis of Camp David. This means no Palestinian state, no right of self-determination, no right of return to the homeland. This is complete abortion of all the aims of our people who have been fighting since the revolution began. In the case that we face this dilemma, we will go to our masses and mobilize them to act. I cannot imagine they will accept the new Palestinian Sadat. I can only imagine that our masses will strenuously fight this pattern of Arafat. You should not be deceived by the statements of Shawwa and Freij. We know the stand of our masses in occupied Palestine. The enemy has made many efforts to divert their struggle-for example, the village leagues created by 'Israel'. Now the destiny of Arafat is not better than that of Dudeen, the head of the village leagues.

Your question gives me the chance to call on every single Palestinian to stand up and take a position on this step. Then I call on every Palestinian organization, every trade union, mass organization and nationalist personality. All members of the PLO Executive Committee, Central Council and Palestinian National Council must give an answer. Are they supporting the Palestinian Sadat, or for continuing the revolution? The masses will judge the position of each organization and PLO body member according to their stand on this step. This step is not a matter to be taken lightly. We are passing through a stage of "To be or not to be". We will make all efforts in order to be.

What other option did Arafat have, considering that he was pushed into the sea?

Arafat had more than one option. To go to Camp David is not the only option. He could have gone directly to Tunis and convened the Executive Committee to discuss the present situation in line with continuing the revolution. Then, we would have gone to the meeting and done our best to make it successful. We would support Arafat, not as a person, but as the Chairman of the Executive Committee of the PLO. This was the nationalist option. Arafat chose the other option.

What is your attitude towards the fact that Egypt and Jordan seem to be supporting Arafat, while Syria opposes him?

Egypt and Jordan are actually supporting Arafat; it doesn't just seem so. Why? The answer lies in the political line. They want him to support the Reagan plan. Syria is against this.

In view of the Israeli position, you might ask if the Reagan plan is applicable? Why did Reagan think up this plan? The US wants to prepare the Arab side - the PLO, Egypt, Jordan. The Israeli side is not yet prepared. If the Arab side is ready, the US will await a change in the Israeli side, whereby the Labor Party will come to power. If this does not happen, the US will say that it cannot press 'Israel' and Arafat will have lost all...I wonder why Arafat has not learned from the lessons of the Arab leaders...

Were you surprised by Arafat's visit to Cairo? How are you going to confront this visit?

Since the revolution left Beirut, we have had the analysis that the Palestinian right wing shows clear indications of taking the US path. Prior to that, it showed willingness to participate in settlements through a Soviet-US sponsored international conference. But after Beirut, it is willing to participate in the US solutions. In this context, I cannot say that the PFLP was surprised; we were able to see the course of the right wing leading to such a step. If you mean whether we anticipated this deviation in December 1983, after the departure of Arafat's troops from Tripoli, my answer is no.

Concerning how we are going to confront this step: First, there has to be a clear assessment of what it means... Second, there should be an agreement and mobilization in all the ranks of the revolution and our masses. In light of this, what should happen? Arafat should be impeached as the Chairman of the PLO, because he does not represent its nationalist line.

What is to be done? I propose the following:

1. Delimiting the target of the battle; it should be against Arafat, who was held responsible for this visit by Fatah's Central Committee, and those who support him in this step. We are against enlarging the battle. This tactical line should be agreed upon in the Palestinian arena.
2. Gathering all groups, forces, unions and personalities opposed to this step. It is high time that a broad front assume responsibility for impeaching Arafat and for knowing how to deal with their secondary contradictions. Despite any differences, there is a point of consensus, i.e., putting a stop to the right wing path.
3. Using legal methods for an extended period to reach this objective.
4. Mobilizing the masses until Arafat is ostracized...We should not be tolerant concerning the national cause. When deviation takes place, all our energies should be mobilized, in our writing and in mass meetings, to call for Arafat's expulsion, for he has abandonned the masses' national objectives. The Palestinian people are able to expell Arafat. An indication of this is that the Central Committee of Fatah declared that it is not responsible for this step.

Do you think that the Palestinians still have a strong military option?

Yes. Of course, if you mean can we actually start liberating Palestinian land, this will be difficult until we have strong pan-Arab support. But if you mean the Palestinian fighters, organized in small groups, striking the Israeli forces in occupied Lebanon and Palestine, yes. This is what is happening. Now our fighters are doing their duty helping the Lebanese to liberate the South.

Can you tell us about your meeting with Abdel Halim Khaddam (Syrian Foreign Minister)?

We have met to discuss three main topics. One, imperialism's aggressive actions in the Middle East and the dangers posed to Syria and the Palestinian revolution. Two, because we believe in Syrian-Palestinian solidarity, we have discussed current problems. Three, due to our presence in Syria, there are always practical issues to be discussed.

●

Interview with Comrade Habash

In anticipation of the PFLP's 16th anniversary, we had the opportunity to interview Comrade George Habash, General Secretary, in late November. We focused on issues that are of principle and historical importance for the PFLP's political line and course of struggle.

Comrade Habash, in PFLP Bulletin no. 69, we printed your speech on the crisis in the Palestinian revolution, where you touched on the relation between this crisis and that of the Arab national liberation movement. Today, we ask you to concentrate on the crisis of the Arab national liberation movement - its roots and solutions.

It is impossible to evaluate the present Palestinian crisis, or to foresee the future of the Palestinian revolution without seeing the real interrelationship between the Palestinian revolution and the Arab national liberation movement. To illustrate this, suppose that Egypt at present was ruled by the party of the working class. Suppose Egypt had a strong alliance with the Soviet Union. Suppose this was the case in other Arab countries surrounding Palestine. Then the situation of the Palestinian revolution would be completely different.

Concerning the Arab national liberation movement, we must distinguish between two features of its crisis: One is the class structure and leadership of that branch of the movement which assumed state power in a number of Arab countries; in this case, with the exception of Democratic Yemen, the crisis is structural. The second feature is the relative weakness of the working class and its parties; concerning this branch of the movement, the question is a different one.

To explain the roots of the structural crisis, we must go back in history and see which class forces were leading the Arab national liberation movement at each stage, and what they achieved.

Anti-colonial struggle

Historically, we can trace the roots of the Arab national liberation movement back to the last quarter of the 19th century. At that time, the aim was freedom from the Ottoman Empire and having a united Arab state, especially in this part of the Arab world, the Mashraq (east). No social demands were raised at that time. The slogans were those of dignity, freedom, unity, Arabism, etc. By the way, certain Lebanese figures, including Maronites, played a positive role in the cultural movement that was a prelude to the political movement.

During World War I, the leaders of the movement decided to cooperate with the Allies, hoping that after the French and British defeated the Ottoman Empire, they (the Arabs) would have freedom and unity. Of course, before the end of the war, the Sykes-Picot agreement (to divide the area between Britain and France) was exposed by the Bolsheviks. When the war was over, the Arab national liberation movement found that the French and British had replaced the Ottomans. The traditional leaders of the movement, Hussein, Sharif of Mecca, and his sons, Abdullah and Feisal (the Hashemites), decided to cooperate with the plans of the colonial powers, but the mainstream of the movement rejected this. The victory of the October Revolution in Russia, and the new incentive it gave to the oppressed peoples, increased the Arab people's motivation for struggle.

From 1918 and through the twenties, the movement tried to fight for the previous slogans, but as you know, the reality was that the area was divided. The leaders raised the same slogans - freedom and Arab unity. In practice, they began fighting the new form of imperialism in each country: Fighting the British Mandate in Palestine, the French in Syria, and the British in Iraq. There was armed struggle: In Syria, the revolt led by Sultan al Atrash in 1925, and another revolt in the Alawite area in the north; in Palestine, the 1936-39 revolt; the 1919 revolt in Iraq, etc. Until the second world war, the struggle continued mainly against French and British colonialism.

The outcome of World War II changed many things: Britain and France became secondary powers in relation to the US. There was the victory of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the socialist camp. There was a general change on the international level as seen in the United Nations Charter and the slogans of freedom, peace, self-determination for the peoples, etc. On this basis, the Arab national liberation movement was able to attain some victories. Of course, we must evaluate the character of these in relation to the slogans that had been raised. These victories were limited to gaining independence in Syria and Lebanon, their joining the UN, having a flag and national anthem, etc. This was formal political independence without unity.

We can relate the nature of these victories to the class leadership of the movement at that time. From the last quarter of the 19th century until World War II, the leadership of the national movement was in the hands of the feudalists and the emerging bourgeoisie. During World War II, the bourgeoisie had expanded, especially in Palestine and Lebanon, and in Syria to some extent, because it was in the interests of French and British imperialism to facilitate the growth of a local bourgeoisie; they needed more local production to supply the needs of their soldiers. Thus, in the late thirties, we saw a new phenomenon in the area - the growth of a bourgeoisie, which was, however, subordinate to the imperialist powers.

The demise of the feudal leadership

1948 was a turning point in the history of the Arab national liberation movement. At this time, it became apparent to the Arab masses that these feudal and bourgeois classes, which had received formal political independence, were not at all able to defend the people's real interests. What happened in Palestine in 1948, exposed the meaning of this independence: that it was superficial; it meant nothing in terms of the people's interests or ability to face the Zionist attack.

I experienced this time; even without a class analysis, it was very easy for me and the masses to see that there was no independence, no dignity. One could see that these newly formed states must disappear in order to have a truly independent Arab state and the unity required to face Zionism in Palestine. At this time we said, "Traitors, traitors, they only want to keep their thrones". There was broad popular rage against the rulers. The class leadership of the Arab national liberation movement, represented by the feudal lords, and this type of bourgeoisie, had failed. If the movement was to fulfill its aims, it would have to be reconstituted. It is thus not a coincidence that in the following period we witnessed the formation of the Baath Party and the Arab Nationalist

Movement, and the July 23rd revolution in Egypt (1952). These movements grew at this particular time to fill the vacancy created by the demise of the former leadership.

In terms of class structure, the former leadership of the Arab national liberation movement was replaced by the leadership of the petit bourgeoisie, which was more related to the masses and their motives than the feudal lords and the bourgeoisie. The fifties and sixties marked a new era in the history of the Arab national liberation movement. Prior to the crisis it is now suffering, it achieved many positive things.

The rise of the petit bourgeoisie

Concerning the crisis in the Palestinian revolution, when we say that the Palestinian bourgeoisie has failed and can no longer lead, we must at the same time remember that in the previous stage, the Palestinian revolution made real achievements under its leadership. The same applies to the new stage of the Arab national liberation movement, which was led by the July 23rd revolution in particular. Before exhausting its role, the new leadership achieved many things. Why were our masses so enthusiastic in their support of Nasser's leadership? Because many aims were fulfilled. In Egypt, the slogans were no longer only independence and dignity; they acquired a social touch. There was the law on land reform, distribution of land to the peasants, the start of cooperatives, nationalization of banks and foreign trade, the national battle to liberate Egypt from British colonialism, nationalization of the Suez Canal, the beginning of links with the socialist countries. There was Nasser's role in the nonaligned movement, which at that time was clearly anti-imperialist.

Moreover, the atmosphere generated by Nasserism affected all the Arab world. We saw the start of armed liberation struggles in Algeria, Yemen and Oman, all supported by Nasser's Egypt. There was Egypt's unity with Syria, which was fully supported by the Arab masses. There was the downfall of the monarchy in Iraq and later Libya, and the defeat of the feudalist-subordinate capitalist coalition in Syria, etc.

Class Roots of the Crisis

Now, let us follow this petit bourgeoisie after its rise to power, remembering that things are dynamic; nothing is static. When it came to power, the petit bourgeoisie wanted to achieve the aims of the masses that were related to its own. Then, after a few years of struggle against imperialism, when this petit bourgeoisie started to acquire its own national market, a change occurred in its class interests. Through the public sector, the interests of this class grew. It obtained facilities and many privileges, and was able to accumulate capital. At the same time, the old system was not completely destroyed. Sectors of agriculture and manufacture were still based on private ownership. So this capital, that came into the hands of the bureaucratic petit bourgeoisie, was invested in partnership with the bourgeois and feudal classes that had been removed from power. Thus a link was forged between the petit bourgeoisie and the classes it had removed from power. This led to suppression of the masses, hesitancy in continuing the national democratic revolution, and diminishing the anti-imperialist trend.

This is what paved the way for the crisis that became apparent in 1967. Instead of the Arab regimes winning the war in 1967, or making it a prolonged war which could uproot imperialism and Zionism, the war and its aftermath deepened the trend to the right. After 1967, at the time when the masses demanded that Nasser remain in his position, he had the chance to radicalize the Arab national liberation movement. However, the class and economic structure of the regime was stronger than Nasser's wishes. What happened in Sadat's era signified that the Arab national liberation movement, as led by the petit bourgeoisie, will come to an end. It will eventually reconcile its interests with those of Arab reaction, imperialism and even Zionism. The results of the 1967 war were a much deeper set-back for the Arab national liberation movement than that of 1948. In 1948, the Arab rulers were not able to liberate Palestine, but at least they refused to grant Zionism the legal right to occupy Palestine. Sadat, on the other hand, initiated cooperation not only with Arab reaction and imperialism, but also with Zionism.

Of course, other branches of the petit bourgeois Arab national liberation movement remained anti-imperialist to a certain extent. Yet what happened to the Egyptian regime is very likely to happen to the other national regimes which have the same class and ideological structure. What happened with the petit bourgeoisie which gained power in Iraq? It began as anti-imperialist in 1968, and did many things for the national and popular interests. Now it is taking the same path.

The October Revolution gave a new incentive....

There is only one exception to this rule, and that is Democratic Yemen. Here there was also a nationalist revolution led by a petit bourgeoisie. The experience of Democratic Yemen shows that if there are a certain set of conditions, this class can achieve the aims of the national democratic revolution and embark on socialist construction. The required conditions include: developing a party based on Marxism-Leninism and democratic centralism, having real ▶

democracy for the masses, being open to form a genuine popular front, and having strategic relations with the socialist community. Under these conditions, certain strata of the petit bourgeoisie can fulfill the tasks of the national democratic revolution in alliance with the working class, the peasants and other oppressed strata.

However, Democratic Yemen in not the main feature; the main feature is what happened in Egypt and Iraq. The crisis of the main branch of the Arab national liberation movement, led by the petit bourgeoisie from 1952 until today, is a structural one; it is rooted in the class nature of the leadership. Though this petit bourgeoisie assumed the position of a bourgeoisie, such a bourgeoisie cannot achieve real liberation or a national democratic revolution. It is not like the bourgeoisie in Europe or Japan. Rather, it is fated to remain as a parasitic bourgeoisie, linked and subordinated to the international imperialist bourgeoisie. Moreover, the ethnic and sectarian conflicts in more than one Arab country show that this class cannot preserve national unity in its own state.

The working class parties

The crisis of the other section of the Arab national liberation movement - the working class and its organizations -is a qualitatively different matter. It is not structural, because the working class and its parties can achieve the aims of the Arab national liberation movement. It is in their class interests to achieve the national democratic revolution headed towards socialism. Moreover, the international situation is conducive to this in view of the growing capacity of the socialist community and the structural crisis of imperialism. This has already occurred in other countries, a prime example being Vietnam, which also suffered partition. The Vietnamese revolution achieved liberation and unity, and began socialist construction.

The crisis of the Arab communist parties, as reflected in their limited growth and achievements, is not structural, but related to certain significant mistakes in their political line. We dealt with this in the Political Report of the PFLP's 4th National Congress. For example, many communist parties regarded this stage as not being theirs. They thought that a national democratic revolution is usually the revolution of the bourgeoisie. They did not take into consideration that things changed radically after the October Revolution. They overlooked Lenin's theory on the link between the national democratic and the socialist revolution, and the importance of the working class's leading role. When certain communist parties have this view, of course it has consequences. They took part in the Arab national liberation movement, but due to their theoretical assumptions, they did not aim to play a leading role. This complicated their situation.

In the fifties, when Nasser's leadership achieved successes, certain communist parties began to speak of the non-capitalist path of development, and the possibility of achieving socialism in this way. This means that the bourgeoisie can achieve socialism, which is a contradiction in itself. This was a very grave theoretical mistake. In Egypt, the Communist Party dissolved itself, because they said that Nasser could achieve socialism.

There were also mistakes concerning the Arab national question, specifically on the questions of Palestine and Arab unity. Despite the clear theoretical position adopted by the international communist movement against Zionism, as a racist, colonial movement tied to imperialism, a change occurred in the Arab communist parties' position on the question of Palestine after 1948. This had negative effects on the national and mass level. Moreover, for a long period, the Arab communist parties failed to recognize the concept of an Arab nation, without taking into consideration the importance of this concept as a weapon in confronting the imperialist, Zionist and reactionary plots.

This should give an idea not only of the roots of the crisis, but also of how we should try to find solutions. Briefly, it is our duty to emphasize that the bourgeois leadership of the Arab national liberation movement is on the way to an end. Accordingly, the working class and its parties must prepare themselves to achieve the tasks that have been put on the agenda, but not achieved, by the feudal, bourgeois and petit bourgeois classes. These tasks can only be achieved by the working class - its party, ideology, strategy and international alliances.

Based on the battle of Beirut, some concluded that allying with the Arabs was useless. Why does the Front reject this narrow, Palestinian-only approach?

It would be a fatal mistake to adopt a narrow Palestinian line; this would mean that Palestine will not be liberated. On the contrary, the experience of Beirut confirms the PFLP's view that the Palestinian revolution is part of the Arab national liberation movement and the Arab revolution.

There are many facts that support our view. The first is the simple fact that the Palestinian people are part of the Arab nation. The Arab liberation movement did not intend to have Syria, Palestine or Lebanon as separate states. It aimed at a united Arab state, for the simple reason that the Arab nation has most, though not all, of the factors that constitute a nation. The division of the Mashraq was the work of the colonial powers, as seen in the Sykes-Picot treaty. Are we to remain victims of what was proposed in this agreement?

Of course, many years have passed since the partition of the area, and this has led some people to think that this idea of the unity of the Arab nation is no longer essential. Let us put this argument aside and concentrate on the practical reasons for the PFLP's rejection of any narrow Palestinian trend:

First: The Zionist colonization and Israeli institutions have developed far beyond what we faced in 1948. In 1948, despite all their efforts, the Zionists were only able to gather 600,000-700,000 settlers in Palestine; this was also despite the evacuation of Jews from Europe due to fascism. Today, Zionism boasts of more than three million settlers in Palestine.

Second: More than half the Palestinian people are living outside of Palestine, mainly in the surrounding Arab countries. In Jordan, there are over one million; in Lebanon, about ½million; in Syria, about 300,000; in Egypt, 50,000-100,000.

In this situation, how must we fight to liberate Palestine? Of course, our people in Palestine fight directly against the Israeli authorities and settlements. Close to two million Palestinians inside confronting the Israeli army can create immense problems for 'Israel'. This says to the world that we exist and have our rights; we will not accept Israeli control, imperialism, etc. However, we are up against the Likud's line, insisting that all of Palestine is 'Israel'. Even the Labor Party concedes only part of Palestine, to be connected with Jordan. We are up against the enormously equipped Israeli army and militarized society. In view of these facts, if we direct our struggle against 'Israel' solely through the Palestinians inside, will we obtain our objectives? No! This explains the fact that in spite of 18 years of struggle, we have not liberated one inch of Palestinian soil.

In order to liberate Palestine, Palestinians in the occupied land must fight, but there must also be a role for the Palestinians outside. Now we get to the essential point. Whenever we, as Palestinians, fight from outside, we have been overwhelmed by the following experience, both in Jordan and in Lebanon: 'Israel' begins to threaten the regimes of these countries, saying, "We don't want the Palestinians operating from your soil. Either you take care of them, or we will do so ourselves, by conquering your land". In Jordan, the result was that the regime made a direct attack to finish off the Palestinian revolution. In Lebanon, the reactionary regime tried many times to finish off the Palestinian revolution prior

to the 1982 Israeli invasion. I think that the Palestinian revolution will face this same situation in any of the countries surrounding Palestine, unless we can rely on genuinely national democratic regimes that will say to 'Israel': "The Palestinians have every right to struggle against you, and we have every right to support them. We will not curtail them for the sake of Zionism". Thus, the Palestinian revolution should have very close relations with the masses and nationalist forces in Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon. Only in this way can we continue our struggle.

Third: Today, it is clearer than ever that Zionism aims not only at Palestine; it is aiming to establish a Zionist empire that would include all of Palestine, the Golan Heights, South Lebanon. These areas would be within the borders of 'Greater Israel'. In addition to its territorial ambitions, 'Israel' wants to be an imperialist force in the whole Middle East. Therefore, any Arab people seeking true independence must fight these expansionist and aggressive aims. What is happening in Lebanon is the prime example of this.

If this point can be made very clear to the masses through active propaganda and organizational work, things will change in the years to come. 'Israel' will not retain its present position. We must clarify to the Lebanese people that 'Israel' has specific interests in occupying the South and dominating all of Lebanon. We must convince the Jordanian people that it is impossible to have dignity or freedom alongside the presence of Zionism and 'Israel'. We must work to have the Egyptian people see things as they are; we must ask them if they have real freedom and dignity. We must make it clear to all the Arab people that 'Israel' is a tool in the hands of imperialism, ready to attack anyone that resists imperialism. If these things were apparent to all, there would not be a solely Palestinian revolution, which will fail totally. Instead, there would be a Palestinian-Arab revolution against Zionism and imperialism. This is the correct path.

Objectively, things are moving in this direction. Today it is clear to the Lebanese people that 'Israel' is not occupying the South to safeguard its borders from Palestinian guerrillas. The Lebanese are now fighting 'Israel' directly. This must take place in all the surrounding countries, whereby the aggressive Israeli policies would be confronted by the millions of the Arab masses. Then 'Israel' would have no way to escape.

We will not be able to liberate one inch of Palestine until we have secured a base from which to fight, in an Arab country bordering Palestine. This joint Palestinian-Arab struggle is the key to liberating Palestine. It is equally in the interests of the Arab masses, for it is the only path to justice and genuine peace in this part of the world.

Jewish-Palestinian struggle vs. Zionism

I would like to go beyond the question to mention another important force that we must deal with when speaking of how to liberate Palestine. This is the Jews themselves, the democratic Jews, those Jews who are suffering the effects of Zionism. To be honest, we have not done very well on this point. If we knew how to work, this could be a very important weapon in the hands of the progressive forces in this region. In fact, there are many Jews who are suffering, but the problem is that their leaders were successful in convincing them that the main contradiction is between the forces of Arab national liberation and all the Jews in 'Israel'. If we make it clear to Palestinians and Jews that the real enemy is Zionism, Arab reaction and imperialism, the struggle to liberate Palestine would gain a new dimension. Let us join forces and fight for peace, democracy, freedom and self-determination, for the Palestinians, for everybody. This would be the path for defeating Zionism and its plans.

The correctness of the stand taken by the PFLP and DFLP, as seen especially in the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the PLO, was not enough to prevent the inter-Palestinian battle in Tripoli. How will we now work to resolve the Palestinian crisis?

We admit that when the sound of canons rose, the voice of our program was almost inaudible. However, we do not believe that the roar of canons will be the loudest indefinitely. Sooner or later, even the quarreling parties will come to the conclusion that internal fighting does drastic damage to the revolution. Moreover, the weight of our people's opinion, and that of our Arab and international allies, will bring the fighting to a stop. In this case, we can really look into the reasons for this crisis. Knowing the reasons, we can struggle politically for the reforms needed in our revolution, especially since the departure from Beirut.

The PFLP-DFLP program presented a clear analysis of this crisis, its roots and manifestations, and the methods of treatment: the needed political and organizational corrections. However, the question which we now face is whether or not it is a matter of a program. We cannot say that we did our duty by presenting this program and the matter is finished. Some might think that since the fighting has stopped, everything is O.K. This is not the case for us. When the fighting stops, the political struggle must be escalated. Not only we, but our people in general, have come to the conclusion that things cannot continue as they were before we left Beirut. There should be ammendments in the political and organizational line, in every field.

Of course, we presented this program because we think it is correct, but we do not regard it as sacred or immune to changes. Let all the Palestinian organizations and people take part in discussing this program. We are ready to listen to all points of view.

The task facing us now is how to apply a mechanism to activate this program, so that it can be implemented. After we and the DFLP agreed on the program, we sent a copy to all Palestinian organizations with a message demanding their opinion. So far, two organizations, the Palestinian Communist Party and the Palestinian Liberation Front, have responded, saying that in general, not in every point, they regard the program as a good basis for unity in the PLO. We are still waiting for an answer and resulting discussion with all organizations, without exception. Yasir Arafat and Abu Jihad gave a general answer, saying that this program could be acceptable. Frankly speaking, we will not accept such answers; we have a long experience with such answers. We will ask Fatah's Central Committee what they really mean: Do they accept this point and that? Are they ready to implement each point? On the political level, the program is very clear: The revolution must fight imperialism, Zionism, reactionary forces. They must say if they really accept this,

Palestinians rally at Bir Zeit, Nov. 7th, to condemn the fighting around Tripoli.

and if their previous practice was on this line. We want to know if they are prepared for self-criticism. On the organizational level, we want to know if they are ready to change the individualist way of leading the revolution. We will not accept general or non-committal responses.

We are also working to get the opinion of the mass and professional unions. There are ten main unions within the framework of the PLO, and we want their view. After this, we want the opinion of prominent Palestinians in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, etc. Especially, we want the opinion of the independent members of the PLO's Central Council and the Palestinian National Council. Perhaps we will try to forge a front within the PLO for unity and democratic reform, that will work politically and organizationally to give the program real force.

Most important, our party branches everywhere are working to see that this program reaches every Palestinian home, because this is the only program for saving the PLO's unity and ensuring reform. From the response we have received, we feel that a great majority of our people are with this program, because they want unity and reform. We will struggle until we have unity on the basis of reform, and we will succeed.

Now, after the Syrian-Saudi agreement, which ended the fighting, some may say, let's take a rest. On the contrary, our political struggle will escalate. What has happened, in particular the fighting, constitutes a burden on the conscience of all Palestinian leaders. Why did it take place? Aside from external factors, there are two main reasons: First, certain leaders do not recognize the law for how to solve internal contradictions at this stage of our liberation struggle. Second, there was an urgent need for reform. The ceasefire is a temporary treatment, but we want a radical, thorough, permanent treatment.

There is disagreement among those Palestinian forces who want reform, concerning the nature of the Palestinian bourgeoisie and how to face the right wing. How do you view this issue?

At present, the term 'Palestinian right' is being used without an accurate definition. The protest phenomenon that began in Fatah and their Palestinian allies are using this term in an infantile leftist fashion. What is the right-wing at this stage of the Palestinian struggle, which is that of national liberation, not building socialism? In a class sense, the right is the bourgeoisie. At this stage, scientifically speaking, it is in the interests of Palestinian workers, peasants and the bourgeoisie to struggle against the Zionist occupation. Thus, the Palestinian bourgeoisie is a nationalist class.

When the Palestinian bourgeoisie embarked on armed struggle in 1965, it was sincere in wanting to liberate all of Palestine. Even now, if it were a question of wishes, they would like to have a fully liberated Palestine, including its coastal waters, for this would be in their political and economic interests. However, they faced difficulties, because this slogan is hard to fulfill. After the experience in Jordan 1970-71, leaders of Fatah were asking how they could continue. They had seen that liberation is difficult and began to lean towards what they thought were more realistic goals, for example, liberating only the West Bank and Gaza. Still, after the defeat in Jordan, it was easy for the Palestinian revolution to reinforce its presence in Lebanon, where the army was weak. The atmosphere of discouragement vanished, and the bourgeois forces again began to speak of total liberation. This was evidenced in the positive decisions of the 11th Palestinian National Council for full liberation of Palestine, etc.

After the October 1973 war, the PLO gained broad international recognition. Certain western states began to talk to the Palestinian right, saying, we supported you not in liberating all Palestine, but to have self-determination in the West Bank and Gaza. After the October war, a state in the West Bank and Gaza Strip seemed to be possible, and the bourgeoisie was ready to consider this. PFLP and other radical forces disagreed with this course.

Notice the difference between the bourgeoisie's stand in 1973-74, when it was ready for a US-Soviet compromise proposal as represented by the Vance-Gromyko statement, and its stand after we left Beirut. Only then was the Palestinian bourgeoisie ready to hop on the US line, and for goals even less than a state.

The current division in Fatah has class significance; the protest phenomenon is a petit bourgeois reaction to the right-wing policies of the Fatah leadership, especially after the way the opposition in Fatah was treated by the leadership. Still, the Palestinian bourgeoisie is a nationalist class. Accordingly, Fatah is among the nationalist forces.

Recently two trends have become highly visible on the international scene: US imperialism's renewed willingness to intervene directly, and the growth of the peace movement. What are the reasons for the first, and how do you evaluate the second?

Without going into the whole question of imperialism's increasingly aggressive policy, we can state three reasons why US imperialism is now intervening directly with its own forces:

One: Imperialism feels that its local tools, its class allies and their armed forces, are unable to resist radical or revolutionary change. The formation of the Rapid Deployment Force was a response to the victory of the Iranian revolution. This meant that the US was preparing for direct intervention. Due to the developments of the last ten years - the popular uprisings and victories, the US feels the need for using its own forces.

Two: US imperialism is not satisfied with merely stopping new victories for the people. It wants to roll back the victories that are already achieved, and this is difficult without direct intervention.

Three: Certain points are particularly strategical for US imperialism's global policies and thus require direct US military presence. The US is actually taking all the preparatory measures for a global confrontation. In an area like the Middle East, with its resources and proximity to the Soviet Union, the US deems it necessary to have its own military bases and forces. The same applies to Central America. In this way, one can see why Lebanon and Grenada became the sites of direct US military intervention.

Four: Military intervention is part of Reagan's policy for solving the crisis of capitalism. The Reagan Administration wants to have credit for the fact that no revolution in the three continents has been victorious during its term in office. As internal problems worsen in the capitalist countries, US imperialism tries to divert the people by directing their discontent against an external enemy.

Concerning the peace movement: I am very pleased that it is becoming a real force and a real nuisance to imperialism. This is clear just from reading imperialist propaganda. Demonstrations continue and broaden against the stationing of the cruise and Pershing II missiles in western Europe. When it became clear to people in the US and Europe that we are on the verge of a nuclear war, the common man asked where the policies of imperialism are leading. Now Reagan can't say that it's the communists only opposing his policies. It is broad sectors of his own people demonstrating against these policies. We look forward to the continued growth and development of these forces. This will be a major obstacle for the Reagan-Thatcher-Kohl policies. We salute these forces and feel the importance of their work at this stage for the sake of all humanity. ●

Occupied Palestine

Resettlement

Resettlement, the central idea in Ben Porat's new plan for the camps of the West Bank and Gaza, is not new. Since 1948, when the majority of the Palestinian people were uprooted and dispersed in refugee camps, many attempts have been made to resettle them. The ultimate aim of all these plans has been to eliminate the will of our people to be steadfast and to struggle to return to their home. The plans have intended to push or entice the Palestinians to give up the struggle against occupation and dispossession in favor of finding new sites to settle down in order to attain a minimal standard of living. Furthermore, these plans are all part, directly or indirectly, of the Zionist and imperialist efforts to resolve the Middle East conflict without addressing the Palestinians' national rights to self-determination, return and an independent state. Rather, they deal with the Palestinians as a group of refugees whose economic and social, but not political, needs must be satisfied in order to achieve stability in the area.

Ben Porat's Project

In November, Mordechai Ben Porat, Israeli Minister without Portfolio, told a press conference that 'Israel' wants to liquidate the Palestinian refugee camps in the 1967 occupied territories. He did not elaborate on how this is going to be done, but termed the plan "humanitarian" and "voluntary". Yet clearly, this project is politically motivated. It aims to negate the Palestinian people's status as refugees and thereby also their rights to their homes in the part of Palestine occupied in 1948, from whence the refugees of the West Bank and Gaza Strip originate.

In the beginning of 1983, the Israeli government appointed Ben Porat to draw up a plan dealing with the problem of the Palestinian refugees in the camps. This was called "Project to improve the conditions of the Palestinian refugees." For this purpose, a committee was formed including Ben Porat, Yitzhak Shamir, Moshe Arens, Moshe Nissim, Yuval Neeman and David Levy. Porat and other Israeli officials made special visits to Palestinian camps such as Anata, Akabat Jabr and Duheisheh, to convince the people to leave their camps. They were promised financial compensation, or homes to be built in other areas, if they are willing to hand over their UNRWA ration cards and ownership papers to land inside the "green line" to the Israeli authorities. The refugees refused this offer due to their understanding of the political motives behind it. To back their claim, they cited the "voluntary" resettlement of refugees in the Gaza Strip, initiated by the Zionist state in 1975.

In June 1983, Porat made his committee's proposals to resettle 170,000 more refugees in Gaza, and 80,000 in the West Bank. The committee proposed dividing the camps into three categories:

1. Camps to be improved without moving residents.
2. Camps to be demolished and residents moved to nearby, unpopulated areas.
3. Camps to be demolished and residents moved to totally new areas. This is similar to what has happened in the Gaza Strip.

The project's requirements

To implement this project, the following steps are being taken or planned by the Israeli authorities:

1. Pressuring the refugees in the camps. This is done by continuous destruction of houses under security pretexts; roads are widened to make it easier to control the camps; surrounding land is confiscated to prevent expansion. Renting or selling houses in the camps is forbidden without the military authorities' permission. More directly terrorist methods are also used: military siege, curfews, travel restrictions, and facilitating the Zionist settler gangs' attacks on the camps.
2. Coordination with UNRWA in order to decrease its services to the refugees until its jurisdiction over the camps is ended. This serves a dual purpose: While eliminating international responsibility for the refugees, it also increases the hard-

After the Zionists tried to destroy the camps in Lebanon in 1982, they are now continuing this war in the occupied territories.

Our thanks to "Al Fajr" for all the illustrations in this section.

US "Contribution"

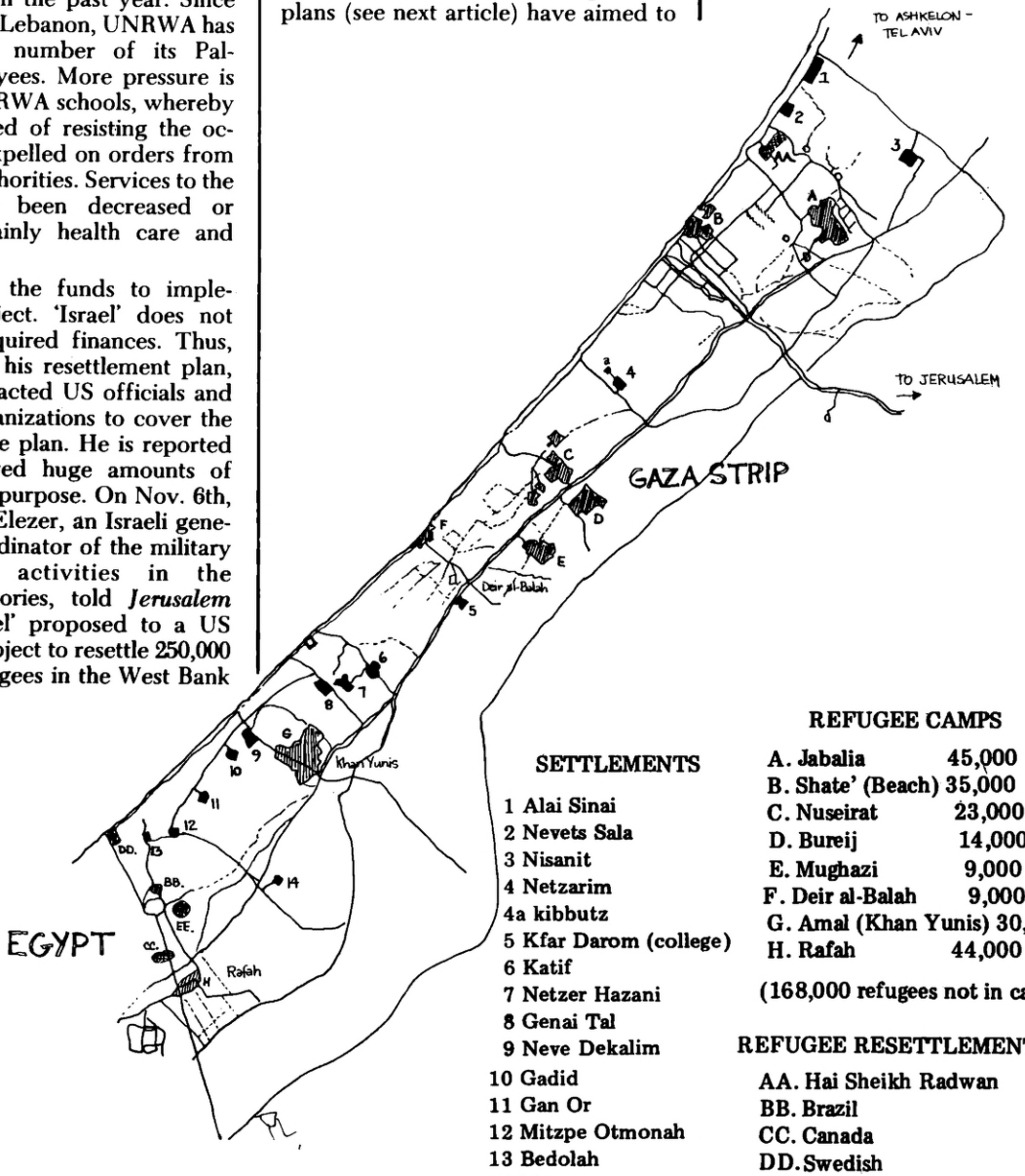
In the context of the resettlement project, it is interesting to note that a US State Department delegation recently visited 'Israel' and suggested projects to develop the West Bank and Gaza Strip with $1.5 million. The US claims that this aid is humanitarian, to help improve the conditions of the Palestinians. In fact, it would be geared to strengthen the hand of so-called moderate elements, who might be prone to cooperate with US plans for 'resolving' the issue of the occupied territories. Therefore, the US role is not only significant in financial terms, but politically as well.

ships of their daily lives, rendering them more vulnerable to resettlement. Israeli coordination with UNRWA has become clear in the past year. Since the 1982 war in Lebanon, UNRWA has decreased the number of its Palestinian employees. More pressure is exerted on UNRWA schools, whereby students accused of resisting the occupation are expelled on orders from the military authorities. Services to the refugees have been decreased or suspended, mainly health care and drinking water.

3. Procuring the funds to implement this project. 'Israel' does not possess the required finances. Thus, after unveiling his resettlement plan, Ben Porat contacted US officials and US Zionist organizations to cover the expenses for the plan. He is reported to have received huge amounts of money for this purpose. On Nov. 6th, Binyamin Ben Elezer, an Israeli general who is coordinator of the military government's activities in the occupied territories, told *Jerusalem Post* that 'Israel' proposed to a US delegation a project to resettle 250,000 Palestinian refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The expenses would come to about $1.5 million.

4. Generating international support for resettlement. To this end, a campaign will be waged to convince international public opinion that with this project, 'Israel' aims to improve the plight of the refugees, and not, as the Arab governments, deliberately maintain the camps for their own interests. Furthermore, such a campaign aims to create an international atmosphere conducive to finding an overall solution to the Palestinian question as a problem of refugees, thus sidestepping the establishment of a Palestinian political entity.

The Zionist state is determined to implement this project. Like previous resettlement plans, the ultimate goal is to have the refugees living in permanent shelters within confined areas and under the sole jurisdiction of the Israeli authorities. While previous plans (see next article) have aimed to accomodate the refugees through economic projects, while preserving traditional social relations and involving the Arab governments' participation, Ben Porat's project aims to resettle Palestinians without establishing an economic base for them. This is consistent with Israeli policy for subordinating the Palestinians under occupation to the Israeli economy. Ben. Porat's project comes as part of the overall Zionist plan, whereby the Palestinians of the 1967 occupied territories are to be surrounded and



SETTLEMENTS

1 Alai Sinai
2 Nevets Sala
3 Nisanit
4 Netzarim
4a kibbutz
5 Kfar Darom (college)
6 Katif
7 Netzer Hazani
8 Genai Tal
9 Neve Dekalim
10 Gadid
11 Gan Or
12 Mitzpe Otmonah
13 Bedolah
14 Morag

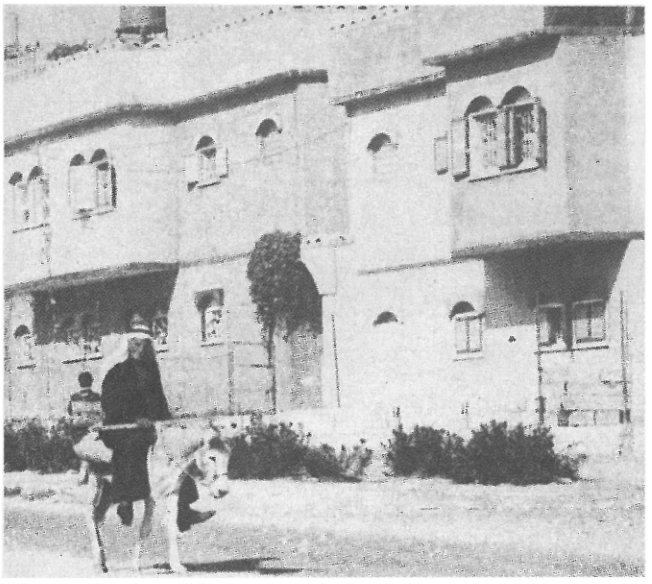
REFUGEE CAMPS

A. Jabalia	45,000
B. Shate' (Beach)	35,000
C. Nuseirat	23,000
D. Bureij	14,000
E. Mughazi	9,000
F. Deir al-Balah	9,000
G. Amal (Khan Yunis)	30,000
H. Rafah	44,000

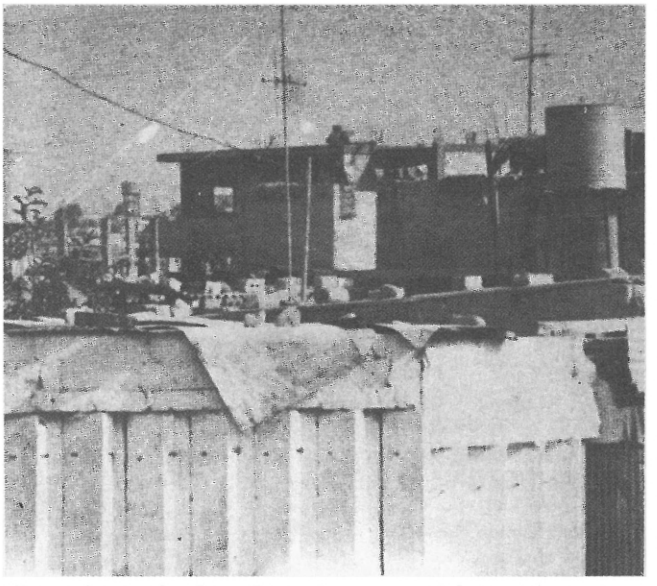
(168,000 refugees not in camps)

REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT CAMPS

AA. Hai Sheikh Radwan
BB. Brazil
CC. Canada
DD. Swedish
EE. Tel al-Sultan



The myth of resettlement: Only 20 of these model housing units were completed.



The reality in the Gaza Strip: 2 room prefab resettlement houses.

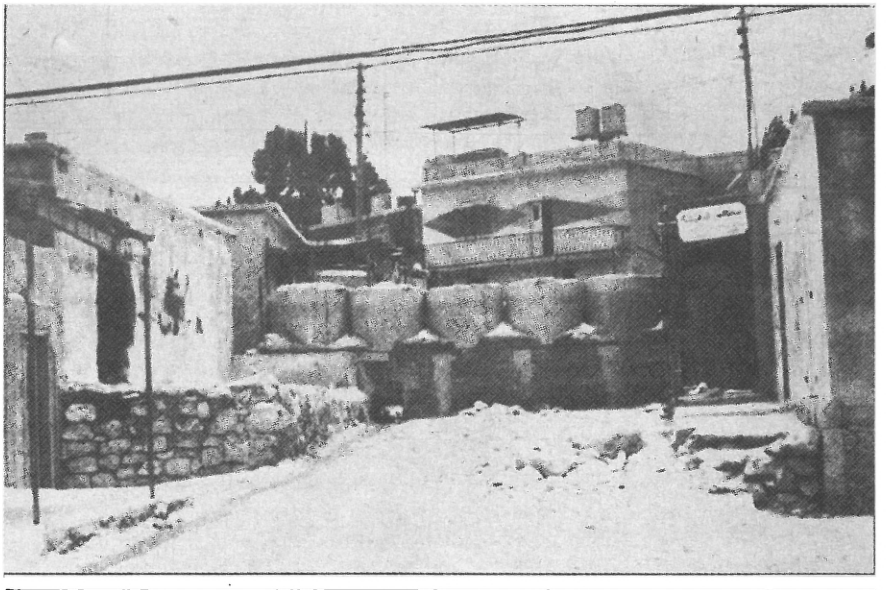
Duheisheh resident: "If they are really humanitarian, as they say, let them remove the barricades with which they close the camp's road, making our people look like animals in a zoo."

confined by many Zionist colonies, reduced to the situation of the Palestinians in the Zionist state, and inclined to emigrate altogether.

"No" to resettlement

Despite the fact that Porat's project was launched at a very critical time for the Palestinian struggle, our people have clearly rejected it. Those who have moved have been forced to do so by the destruction of their houses. In the past, the Palestinian people have aborted resettlement plans, despite their hard living conditions. Today, they are capable of doing the same to Porat's project. This requires unity among all the national institutions, organizations, committees, unions, etc., in the occupied territories. Moreover, it requires the political, moral and material support of the PLO and all its forces on the local and international level. A national program must be worked out to confront this dangerous project, to wage a mass campaign against resettlement and provide aid to the national institutions. In particular, the Palestinian National Front must be revived as the leader of the Palestinian people's struggle in the occupied territories. Furthermore, there must be a continuous public campaign, with activities condemning the resettlement project, for it is truly a plan to destroy the Palestinian people's right to their homeland. ●

Zionist-built barrier at entrance to Duheisheh.



Past Plans for Resettlement

In August 1949, an international committee proposed irrigation and road-building projects that should lead to employment for the Palestinian refugees. Then came a US plan to resettle the refugees as part of a general program for developing the Middle East. According to this plan, the candidate states would receive economic and technical aid from an agency financed by the US, Britain and France, for drawing refugees living there into economic projects and resettling them, regardless of their desire to return to their homeland. At the same time, 'Israel' should accept the return of 100,000 Palestinians to overcome some of the political obstacles. However, this project failed. The Palestinians rejected any attempt to resettle them. Moreover, the US failed to extract Arab recognition of the Zionist state, which was a prerequisite for the plan getting underway.

On Dec. 11, 1951, the Director of UNRWA made a report to the UN General Assembly in which he requested a $250 million three year budget. Of this, $200 million was to be used for projects to assimilate Palestinian refugees economically, ▶

while the remainder was for aid and the costs of moving them from the camps and resettling them. Afterwards, responsibility for the refugees would be turned over to the Arab governments. Though the political committee of the Arab League was ready to accept this plan, the Palestinian people rejected it. The Executive Committee of the Arab (Palestinian) Refugees made the following statement to the Arab Foreign Ministers: "We reject this plan and consider resistance to any enforced resettlement to be a means of struggle to defend our national cause, as are the threats to the interests of those countries that created Israel and work to preserve it. Any Arab leader who agrees on resettlement is a traitor to the Palestinian cause. The Palestinian people are not ready to make any compromises in exchange for their dear homeland. Thus, we reject all forms of resettlement and will not budge one iota from our objective: the return to our homeland."

Nevertheless, resettlement projects continued. A plan was proposed to resettle refugees in the northwestern Sinai. Preparations for this plan began shortly before the US Secretary of State, on June 1, 1953, said that some of the refugees could be resettled in 'Israel', while the majority of them could, in one way or another, be assimilated in the neighboring Arab countries, but this depended on the irrigation projects through which new territories could be reclaimed. In June 1953, through US-Egyptian cooperation with UNRWA, a program was adopted whereby $30 million would be invested in this plan aiming to resettle 59,500 refugees living in the camps of Gaza, in the Sinai. The land was supposed to be transformed into an agricultural area, villages built and employment provided. It was proposed that the resettlement project duplicate the existing social structure in the camps, keeping the hamulas (extended families) intact in order to preserve traditional social relations and leadership. The plan was to be implemented over 25 years.

The danger of this was the fact that the US was serious about implementing such a comprehensive plan, viewing it as a basis for resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict and a prelude to having 'Israel' as a full partner in a regional alliance against the growing Arab national liberation movement and the socialist camp. As the plan was being forwarded, 'Israel' waged a terror campaign against the Palestinians in the Gaza camps to force them to accept it. However, the Palestinian people and their political forces in Gaza demonstrated under the slogan "No to resettlement."

After the Israeli invasion of Gaza in February 1955, the Palestinian masses declared that they would not be subjugated by the stick and carrot policy. They insisted that the essence of the Palestinian problem is not economic or psychological, but that it is a national question and requires the fulfillment of Palestinian national rights.

Initially, the Egyptian administration in the Gaza Strip used violent means to enforce resettlement along the lines of the US plan. It later changed its position as a result of escalating tension with the US, due to Nasser's refusal to join the US-sponsored regional pact (Baghdad Pact). Also, the Israeli attack on Egypt in February had led to this change. The UN Secretary General's 1959 report recognized this fact; he said that assimilation was not possible or acceptable if implemented by force, and that the question should be dealt with on a voluntary basis if permanent results - political and economic stability - were desired.

The new occupation

In the aftermath of the 1967 war, and Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Zionist authorities thought that conditions were ripe for dismantling the refugee camps. By preserving and concentrating the Palestinian national, social and cultural identity, the camps continuously contribute to the Palestinian national struggle. In the camps, the hope of return and freedom is embodied and continues to grow with each new generation. With this in mind, the Israeli authorities understood that there would be daily confrontation with the Palestinians, and that the camps must be liquidated in order to achieve full control of the territories and to be able to root out the commandos. The Israelis destroyed houses close to the main streets and opened wide roads to make it easier for the army to control the camps during demonstrations. They attempted to break down densely populated areas, and move part of the population to other sites in order to dismantle social relations among the residents and push them to search for housing elsewhere, preferably outside the occupied territories. While contributing to destroying the camps, these practices also aimed to reduce the international sympathy with the Palestinian struggle, which is elicited by the refugee problem, and ultimately to end any international responsibility for the Palestinian people.

Prior to the present one, the Israeli government has attempted two significant resettlement projects:

1. The attempt to tie the camps to the municipalities in order to end their distinctive, independent character. By subjecting the camps' activities and services to the municipality system, the Israelis prepared to end UNRWA's jurisdiction over the refugees. In 1971-72, this attempt failed due to the united position of the Palestinian mayors and the masses of the camps; some who collaborated with this plan were liquidated.

2. Building housing projects in the Gaza Strip, as started in 1975, for instance Al Nasr (Victory) project in Gaza, and Beit Lahda and Al Amal (Hope) projects in Khan Yunis. There the occupation authorities built model units where apartments could be leased for 30,000 Israeli pounds by anyone who would forfeit his house in the camp, or by families whose houses had been destroyed in the broadening of roads. These houses were leased for 99 years to married couples. Later on, the authorities sufficed with giving a piece of land for people to build their own house. Gradually the size of these plots diminished to only 70 square meters per family. In addition, there was an annual housing tax of 5,000 shekels.

Many forms of pressure were applied to implement this project, such as preventing people from renovating or enlarging their houses. According to Israeli sources, this project now encompasses 8,000 families (50,000 people). Even though this project continues, the number of people enticed into it is decreasing constantly.

So far, about 5,000 persons have been transferred from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank, particularly to Jenin, Tulkarem and Jerico. Others were transferred to Rafah camp in the Sinai Peninsula, which created a problem with the Egyptian authorities. UNRWA cooperated in this project by ceasing aid to refugees for renovating their houses, and by generally reducing services, totally suspending the distribution of food rations and school materials to students.

It is important to mention that the Israelis' focus on the Gaza Strip was specifically motivated by the population concentration there, where refugees constitute 60% of the total population, and by the very active role of the Palestinian resistance movement in the camps, and its military operations. ●

Response to the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform

In mid-October, the PFLP-DFLP Joint Leadership presented the Program for Unity and Democratic Reform in the PLO (see PFLP Bulletin no. 69 for the full text). The intention was for this program to find its way into every Palestinian home to elicit discussion and crystallize a broad mass force for resolving the internal Palestinian crisis in the interests of continuing the revolution. Since then, the PFLP's weekly magazine *Al Hadaf* has been conducting opinion surveys among the Palestinian community in different countries. Below we print the preliminary results in the form of examples of responses to the program received by early December.

Occupied Palestine

Bassam Shakaa, elected mayor of Nablus

"Preserving the PLO and its unity is a guarantee to our people and our nation, and also a guarantee for keeping peace in the world. The Arabs have to face this fact with deep thinking; there is no Arab affiliation without PLO unity. Any reforms have to be achieved in the legal frameworks, and we must work quickly to stop the disintegration of the PLO now taking place, and to strengthen our organization to continue carrying out its mission and prevent external interference from affecting its achievements."

Karim Khalaf, elected mayor of Ramallah

"The program is a good one as a basis for democratic dialogue, for true reform in the PLO and its institutions, removed from fighting among brothers...What I hope is that everyone is liable to this program and works for its application in order to preserve the PLO's unity and protect our people's cause from the dangers now threatening it with containment, liquidation, or disintegration. I appeal to all PLO Executive Committee members and to all others to exert all efforts to maintain the unity of the PLO and its leadership. We should all be aware of the conspiracy that now aims at liquidating our people's cause."

Ibrahim Tawil, elected mayor of Al Bireh

"We are for the program as the basis for constructive democratic dialogue. We are against tutelage from any side. We are for democratic discussions; our people are known for their democratic thinking and principles. We call on everyone to sit together for agreement around the table of the people, the table of the revolution, of unity and of dialogue, on the basis of the program presented by the PFLP and DFLP, and accepted by Fatah."

Mustafa Natshe, acting mayor of Al Khalil

"The program for reform and unity presented to Fatah by the PFLP and DFLP is a constructive step towards our people's unity on a democratic basis. We appeal to our protesting brothers to follow democratic procedures within the PLO institutions in order to fulfill their demands, and to put guns aside...If their demands are genuine and they are for reform, then let them sit with their brothers, focusing on this program in order to enact the desired unity and reform, and achieve the aims of our nation and people."

Wahid Hamdallah, elected mayor of Anabta

"Our people in the occupied territories blessed the program for unity and democratic reform submitted by the Joint Leadership. They support it, for this courageous and independent Palestinian program expresses the demands and will of our Palestinian people everywhere."

Haj Amin Nasr, elected mayor of Qalqilia

"We believe that this program would surely remedy the situation and secure all the demands of the protestors. They have to sustain this program and walk together in the framework of Palestinian national unity."

Lebanon

The following cable was addressed to the General Commander, the General Secretaries of all Palestinian organizations and the PLO Executive Committee members:

"In the name of the Popular Committee of Baddawi Camp, we send you our salutations. At this difficult time, when our revolution is subject to many dangers, of being contained, liquidated or split, we ask you to confirm the reform program presented by the PFLP-DFLP Joint Leadership and to arrange for the implementation of this program, for its contents represent a genuine guarantee for the continuity of our revolution and democratic reform in the Palestinian arena. The application of this program will guarantee and strengthen the unity of the PLO, our independent decision and our national legitimacy..."

The Popular Committee,
Baddawi Camp
North Lebanon,

Damascus

Khaled Fahoum, Chairman of the Palestinian National Council

"In the prevailing crisis experienced by the Palestinian revolution, many programs and solutions have been suggested. The first program was suggested by the Central Council delegation. Then the Joint Leadership of the PFLP and DFLP presented a detailed program for democratic reform. I consider this a very good program, but it needs everybody's efforts to put it into practice. It is not enough to present a program. We all have to cooperate in order to achieve the application of this program. I believe that as the demands for reform increase, so does our confidence in the high degree of awareness of our people."

Mahmoud Khalidi, director of the PLO office in Damascus

"I read this document carefully and have a high estimation of its contents. It reflects a high degree of awareness and concern for the unity of the revolution, for the independent Palestinian decision and for the need for democratic dialogue and democratic reform through legitimate PLO institutions, and for saving the PLO and its active role."

Um Sabri, member of the General Secretariat of the General Union of Palestinian Women

"It is a good program in terms of the points it tackles. We would have hoped that the comrades in the PFLP and DFLP had been able to apply such a program prior to the fighting now taking place in North Lebanon. We realize how much these two organizations influence the Palestinian struggle. We highly evaluate this program and ▶

hope to see its contents applied very soon."

Poet Ahmad Dahbour, member of the General Union of Palestinian Writers and Journalists

"I view the reform document presented by the PFLP-DFLP Joint Leadership as the Palestinian national statement which, if put to a referendum, would be voted for by all Palestinians."

Doctor Suleiman Berkawi, skin specialist at Deir Yassin Collective, a Palestinian Red Crescent Society hospital in Yarmouk camp

"The role of the PFLP and DFLP is of great importance in the Palestinian national struggle, especially at present, whereby these two organizations, through their Joint Leadership and preceding alliance, drew the support of many independent Palestinian nationalists. This nationalist alliance within the PLO represents an important independent force which will protect the PLO from any leftist or rightist deviation, especially now when an adventurous method was followed by fighting, military options and bloodshed. This poses a real danger to the independent nature of the PLO and its unity, and gives a pretext to our enemies to again impose tutelage over our Palestinian people. The PFLP and DFLP position represents an important compass for our Palestinian people, capable of rescuing them from this tragic situation. In my opinion, this program is of great importance, though I have a few remarks on some formulations, especially concerning the contents of the introduction and its analysis of some of the reasons which necessitated this action and this program." ●

Military Operations

Revolutionary violence, practiced in concordance with a clear political line, is an essential component of the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Military operations against the Zionist enemy are our legitimate response to the occupation of our homeland, Palestine. They are our masses' answer to the daily violence of the enemy. The historical examples of victorious liberation movements prove that revolutionary violence is the only way to resolve the contradiction between the masses and the enemy, in our case, imperialism, Zionism and Arab reaction.

The military operations carried out in occupied Palestine are an essential and integral part of our strategy of protracted people's war. In general, these operations have political and military aims which can be classified in the following three broad categories:

One: Striking the Zionist military establishment in order to place the enemy on the defense, force it to disperse its forces and lower the morale of the settler population.

Two: Striking economic institutions. A frequent target is the infrastructure used to facilitate the exploitation of our people, and which provides the backbone of the Zionist state and its aggression. Also, targeting economic institutions speaks to our determination not to allow 'Israel' to be a safe haven for monopoly capital.

Three: Providing security for our masses and the revolution by liquidating collaborators.

The ability of our revolution to carry out military operations today is in itself a victory for the Palestinian cause. Each operation refutes the Zionist claim of having destroyed the PLO in the barbaric invasion of Lebanon in the summer of 1982. A recent proof of the vitality of armed struggle was the bomb attack on an Israeli bus in Jerusalem on December 6th, which killed six and wounded over 46 other Zionist settlers. Israeli police admitted that this was the worst explosion "in Israel" since 1978. We salute the heroic militants who carried out this operation, demonstrating the inability of the enemy to liquidate our revolution, and our people's will to resist until victory. The following are other operations carried out in occupied Palestine in the recent period:

Nov. 2: On Balfour Day, a hand grenade was thrown at an Israeli jeep in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Younis.

A car carrying settlers was attacked with petrol bombs near Bethlehem in the West Bank.

Nov. 10: A bomb exploded in Petah Tikva supermarket, near Tel Aviv, in the north of occupied Palestine. The Zionists did not specify damages.

An Egged bus was firebombed while passing Al Amari camp near Ramallah, wounding the bus driver and several settlers.

In the West Bank village of Qabatiya, a Zionist police car was destroyed by firebombs.

Nov. 13: An Israeli car was attacked with light arms fire near the West Bank town of Qalqilia. The Zionist authorities did not comment on casualties.

Nov. 17: An Israeli military bus was firebombed near Balata camp outside the West Bank town of Nablus.

Nov. 18: Two Egged buses carrying soldiers were firebombed while passing through Tulkarem in the West Bank.

An Israeli military observation post in Tulkarem was attacked by molotov cocktails.

Fire bombs were thrown at an Israeli patrol near Tulkarem. destroying the vehicle.

Nov. 21: Four fire bombs were thrown at the Israeli military compound at Tulkarem.

An Israeli patrol was attacked by firebomb in the West Bank village of Thonbh.

An Israeli military bus was firebombed while passing Al Amari camp.

Nov. 28: An armed Israeli settler from Bracha settlement was wounded in a knife attack in the Nablus market. ●

Jerusalem, Dec. 4: Israeli bus destroyed.

Lebanon

Besides beefing up US-Zionist cooperation, the late November visits of Shamir, Arens and then Amin Gemayel to Washington, revealed the enemy forces' current approach to national reconciliation in Lebanon. A month earlier, the Geneva talks had resulted in resolutions which reflected the gains of the nationalist forces in the September mountain war. The Lebanese fascists and regime had conceded that: Lebanon's identity is Arab; the May 17th agreement with 'Israel' is frozen; there is need for reform in the Lebanese state and society.

Afterwards, the enemy alliance set out to reverse the results of this first round of national reconciliation talks. One loophole to be exploited was Gemayel's mandate to consult with those providing troops to the Multinational Forces (MNF), especially the US. The stated aim was finding ways (other than the May 17th agreement) to ensure Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. However, once in Washington, Gemayel was keen to reaffirm support to this agreement, saying that he and Reagan had explored "the best ways and means not merely to implement the agreement, but going beyond the letter of the law, to set up the most appropriate mechanisms and conditions for the achievement of our common interests and policy objectives". This signified official Lebanese consent to the new imperialist-Zionist plans and attacks against the Lebanese nationalists, Syria and the Palestinian revolution.

In fact, by the time Gemayel arrived in Washington, the die had already been cast by the new US-Israeli agreements. The US position on Lebanon mirrors its stand on Namibia: Withdrawal is left up to the Tel Aviv and Pretoria occupiers, respectively, and is moreover linked to the removal of troops supporting the popular, nationalist forces (Syrian and Cuban, respectively). The US-Israeli discussions had focused on forcing Syria to withdraw, and on ideas aired by Arens about the possibility of future, partial Israeli withdrawals, if these could be coordinated with the Lebanese regime, so as to meet Zionist 'security' demands. (These ideas pertain only to the coastal region and would leave Israeli troops along the front lines with the nationalist forces in the Beqaa Valley.) Accordingly, Reagan pressed Gemayel to increase coordination with 'Israel', so that the Lebanese Army could move into any area to be so evacuated.

Such an approach is obviously unworkable. The September war, and the continuing clashes between the Lebanese Army and the nationalist forces, show that the vast majority of Lebanese refuse this army in the absence of political reforms. Moreover, the Israelis themselves continue to sabotage what remains of Lebanon's legal authority, as was again evidenced in early November, when the remaining Lebanese police and municipal officials were evicted from occupied Saida's city hall.

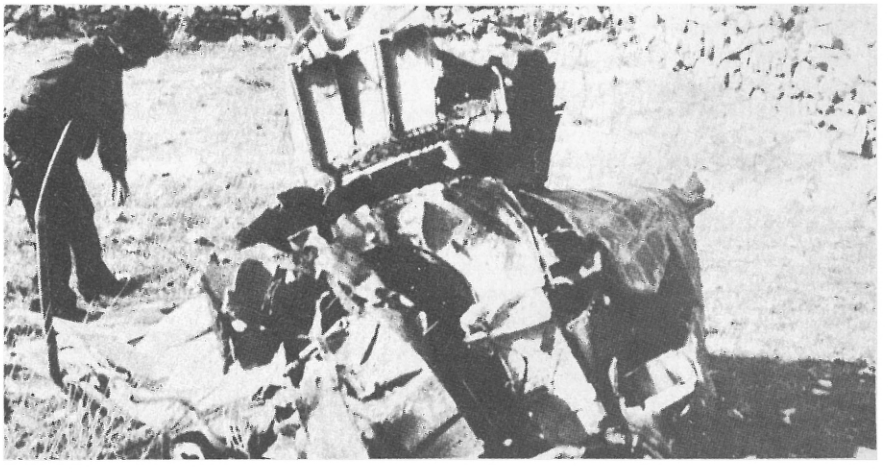
The real reason for Reagan to wave these hopes of Israeli withdrawal in front of Gemayel's nose is to activate the Lebanese regime's role in pressing for Syrian withdrawal, and to push it into new, direct talks with the Israeli occupiers. This in effect nullifies the other US advice to Gemayel: to broaden the political base of his regime. Reagan's formula for national reconciliation is for the regime to make some gestures at power-sharing intended to coopt the nationalist leadership. This should ease the task of passifying the masses, isolating Syria and breaking the broad Lebanese nationalist-Palestinian alliance. It is also within this framework that the regime resumed high level contacts with Syria, while imperialism and Zionism made new military strikes with the aim of intimidating Syria into withdrawing its troops.

US imperialism's prescriptions, coupled with its continuing military intervention, can only deepen the Lebanese regime's isolation. In reality, the US regards Lebanese national reconciliation as a political sideshow used to divert from its real priorities: converting Lebanon into a NATO base and a gateway for spreading Camp David. Thus, it is no surprise that the second round of national reconciliation talks have yet to be held. This meeting should focus on reform in the Lebanese state and society. This is an issue which neither imperialism nor the Lebanese fascists wish to tackle in any meaningful way, for fulfilling the popular and nationalist demands would rule out the fascist hegemony considered pivotal for implementing the enemy plans. Though President Gemayel has started consultations on forming a national unity government, he has thus far only spoken with members of the outdated and always unrepresentative, confessional parliament. He is still delaying acceptance of Prime Minister Wazzan's resignation, which was a main demand of the National Salvation Front and thus a prelude to any national unity government.

Escalating intervention

Typically, Reagan's only concrete move was promising Gemayel more US aid to the Lebanese Army and the formation of a US-Lebanese joint military committee. All in all, it is not surprising that the most decisive events in Lebanon continue to be those in the battlefield. While clashes continue, pitting the Lebanese Army and fascists against the nationalists in the Beirut and mountain areas, imperialist intervention escalated and became more systematic. At a mid-November meeting of MNF military leaders on a US warship off Beirut's coast, US commanders aired plans for "massive and exemplary anti-guerilla operations" (Livia Rokach, *Al Fajar*, Nov. 25). This signalled heavier Marine aggression on the southern outskirts of Beirut. Marine statements about limiting "retaliation" to spare civilian casualties became a cruel joke in view of their use of "beehives", shells that emit thousands of flying steel darts (as documented by NBC on Dec. 2nd). These anti-personnel weapons were used in Vietnam. Now their destruction is turned on the poor of southern Beirut. Meanwhile, barrages from US warships

US A-6 Intruder downed by Syrian forces, Dec. 4th.



reached new heights on Dec. 14th and 15th, when the giant firepower of the New Jersey was unleashed on the mountains.

Generally, the MNF have beefed up their presence and logistics. In early November, the US 6th Fleet was reinforced with 30 new vessels. Later in the month, agreement was reached for the US to use its bases in Turkey for supply runs to Lebanon and increase its use of Turkish ports for US warships. Turkey's dictators have evidently decided that any negative repercussions on trade with Arab countries will be offset by the $750 million they will receive from the US in military aid next year. Britain is also stationing three warships off the Lebanese coast to back up its MNF contingent.

Underlying the overt military aggression, there has been increased emphasis on imperialist intelligence operations. In addition to its air raid on the Beqaa, Nov. 17th, France is playing a prominent role in these efforts, relying especially on Arabic-speaking African mercenaries from its former colonies, who are among the Foreign Legionnaires in its MNF contingent. Joint French-Lebanese Army units man checkpoints along the coastal road in the 'Greater Beirut' area. Moreover, French intelligence experts have been integrated into the Lebanese military and political intelligence branches. The French takeover of police functions is a back-up to the US anti-guerrilla campaign. This year, when 'Israel' again made air and sea attacks a regular feature of life in Lebanon, with a total of 12 so far, it was no longer the sole foreign aggressor, but enjoyed the 'good company' of its imperialist allies.

On the internal scene, the Dec. 1st assassination of Sheikh Halim Takieddin, the most prominent Druze religious leader living in West Beirut, shows the Lebanese fascists' intent to sabotage national reconciliation. Then came the car bomb in West Beirut on Dec. 5th, which killed 16 and injured 100 citizens; this was claimed by the Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from the Foreigners, notorious as a front for the Phalangist Party.

However, the Zionist-imperialist aggression has not gone unchallenged. The US Marines have drawn fire on themselves and suffered new casualties. Most important, the heroic decision and performance of the Syrian forces to confront the enemy warplanes, which resulted in downing two US planes on December 4th, and an Israeli bomber and three reconnaissance drones on other days, show the potential for thwarting the enemy aggression, if the Lebanese-Palestinian-Syrian nationalist alliance is strengthened. ●

The Occupied South

Sealed Off, But Still Resisting

To the extent that the Zionist War Minister may be considering further partial pull-backs in Lebanon, the reason lies in the sustained military and mass resistance of the southern population. Though the occupiers virtually sealed off the South following the Nov. 3rd explosion in their Sour headquarters, the Lebanese National Resistance Front (LNRF) has continued operations on a daily basis. On Nov. 20th, Israeli television reported that there had been 89 anti-occupation operations since the IDF redeployed along the Awali River on Sept. 4th, with 35 soldiers killed and 64 wounded. By the end of the year, this was 39 killed in 130 attacks.

Having previously closed the Awali crossings, the Israelis imposed new restrictions in mid-November, requiring a special pass for Lebanese wishing to drive a vehicle into the occupied South. The result was not more security for the Zionists, but further enragement of the Lebanese. Having traveled to another part of the country, a citizen had to apply at the Israeli liaison office in Dbayeh (fascist-dominated town north of Beirut) for a visa to drive home. The other alternative was applying in Saida before leaving the South. The first day this procedure was in effect, only seven of the 200 Lebanese, who lined up at IDF headquarters in Saida, received passes. After waiting for hours, the rest were rudely driven away by Zionist soldiers who unleashed police dogs and fired in the air. The Israelis evidently also found this arrangement too cumbersome, for the pass restriction was lifted within a week for Lebanese. Palestinians still need a special permit.

Bottlenecking north-south traffic has disasterous effects. With the bridges only open nine hours daily, traffic was cut to about one-third the normal flow. In early December, the mayor of Saida estimated that 70% of the South's citrus and banana crop, normally shipped to Beirut and on to other Arab countries, was going to waste or sold at a loss. The cost of transporting building materials tripled due to the prolonged waiting time at the bridges; thus, construction came to a halt in the South, as did public works projects. The 3,000 civil servants living in Beirut found it difficult to reach their work in Saida.

Two separate attacks on Israeli checkpoints at the Awali bridge in mid-November exemplified the popular anger at this attempt to isolate and strangle the South. Even with the abolishment of the permit, top security measures still prevail, clogging traffic and eliciting mass resistance. On Nov. 23rd, Zionist soldiers fired in a crowd of people crossing the bridge on foot, wounding four Lebanese civilians. The soldiers then had to beat off the crowd that was pelting them with rocks.

Israeli patrols and convoys continue to be plagued by roadside explosions, especially in the vicinity of occupied Saida. The popular support given to the LNRF was clearly demonstrated on December 2nd, when freedom

One of the two crossings at the Awali line.

fighters managed to ambush a Zionist patrol in the middle of Nabatiyeh market, killing one and injuring four enemy soldiers. This was a few days after squadrons of Israeli jets had attempted to terrorize the southerners by staging a 30-minute air exercise, dropping smoke bombs in repeated mock assaults on the Nabatiyeh area.

Economic disruption is practiced in other ways than closing the bridges. On a mid-December morning, Israeli soldiers raided Nabatiyeh's market, firing over the heads of the crowd. They just happened to choose a Monday, the day when people come from all over the South to buy and sell. More permanently damaging has been the prohibition against fishing beyond 4km offshore. On Dec. 11th, 300 Lebanese fishermen demonstrated against this in Saida; a group of them seized a truckload of fish brought in from 'Israel'. The occupation forces tried to absorb the popular rage by pledging to lift the restrictions. The next day, when the fishermen went out, their boats were rammed by Israeli gunboats, and they were forced back to shore after their nets were destroyed.

New arrests and terror

Arrests continue to be a source of friction between the occupied and the occupiers. No sooner were the Zionists forced to empty Ansar in order to reclaim their captured soldiers, than they began to collect new political detainees. Between November 24th, when Ansar was emptied, and Dec. 1st, at least 70 residents of the South were arrested; about seven were those just released. In the week following the release, the Phalangists kidnapped about 70 Palestinians and Lebanese, also including former Ansar detainees, in different parts of the South. Though some were later released, others have joined the ranks of the 'disappeared'. The vast majority of the released have been called in and warned by the IDF. The enemy was not happy about releasing the heros of Ansar, and even less so when over 3,000 chose to remain in their homes or camps in South Lebanon. Renewed Zionist-fascist terror aims to intimidate them into leaving the South.

Arrests in the Saida area in mid-December led to clashes with local villagers, notably in Kfar Melki, where the people held a strike and sit-in in their mosque. This followed an anti-occupation sit-in in Saida's main mosque the week before. On Dec. 29th, Saida went on strike to protest the arrest of religious leaders and the killing of three Lebanese civilians by the IDF in the course of their arrest campaign. The next day sit-ins were held in Sunni and Shiite mosques throughout Lebanon, with religious leaders calling for all forms of resistance to the occupation. Again, the Israelis closed the Awali crossings.

One of Saida's 500 underemployed fishermen.

Zionist dilemma widens as collaborators dwindle

With continuing occupation of the South, the Zionists have locked themselves in a dilemma. While reaping great benefits in terms of trade and new water resources, they pay heavy economic and social costs for maintaining the occupation troops. The loss of Israeli lives contributes constantly to the simmering social crisis in the Zionist entity. Yet every repressive measure, aimed at reducing these losses, elicits broader mass resentment in Lebanon, in turn improving conditions for more attacks on the IDF.

The Zionists had hoped to escape this vicious circle by handing over more and more of the tasks of controlling the population to local collaborators. Since Saad Haddad's fascist militias are rightfully known as no more than an extension of the IDF, the Israelis set up and armed the so-called national guards in southern villages and camps. However, these units have generally remained small and isolated, especially as mass resentment of the occupation has grown. The Amal movement's boycott of all forms of collaboration played a significant role in crystallizing mass sentiment against the 'national guards'. Also the LNRF has played an active role in limiting collaboration; at least half a dozen 'national guard' figures have been liquidated, which served as a warning to others.

The crisis of the Zionist policy for creating surrogate security forces became public on Nov. 30th. Abu Sateh, commander of the nucleus of an Israeli-planned 'Shiite army' in the South, announced in West Beirut that he had disbanded his 120 man unit, most of whom then fled the South; he pledged allegiance to Amal. Abu Sateh explained how he had been drawn into cooperation with the Israelis to "save us from sectarian militias" (Saad Haddad and the Phalangists), but later realized that "This army would not be under our command, but under orders from the Israeli army to ensure sectarian fighting in the south similar to what happened in the mountains." He revealed that the Israelis had told him that the 'Shiite army' would eventually number 14,000 and provide security as called for in the Lebanese-Israeli accord. Abu Sateh's changed position not only brings to an end one of the largest groups organized by the Israelis. It also signifies that fewer Lebanese are susceptible to the Zionist's divide and rule policy of arming collaborators under the pretext of providing defense from the fascists when, in fact, the real intention is to use them to suppress their own people.

New Chapter in US-Zionist Strategic Cooperation

While reading the following article, one must bear in mind the attempt of the western media and officials to portray the US-Israeli strategic alliance agreement as something new. True, the US and 'Israel' will escalate their joint involvement in the Middle East more openly, but the idea itself is old. This agreement is the result of over three decades of close political, economic and military cooperation. It is, moreover, a continuation of the ongoing Camp David conspiracy which is enacted in successive phases, each emphasizing different methods and points of attack. While the Memorandum of Understanding signed in Nov. 1981, set out the principles of US-Zionist strategic cooperation, the new agreement is a concrete working program based on these principles.

Overview of the agreement

The strategic alliance agreement was announced on Nov. 30th, after the conclusion of high level talks in Washington D.C., between Israeli Prime Minister Shamir and Defense Minister Arens and their counterparts in the US administration, Reagan and Weinberger. It was agreed to set up a joint political-military committee, which is scheduled to meet in early January, to discuss joint military exercises, stockpiling US military equipment in 'Israel', US purchase of Israeli supplies and services, etc.

This was the first time Reagan had received an Israeli Prime Minister in 18 months, and their meeting was billed as signalling renewed friendship. Shamir's having replaced Begin offered the chance for the US and Zionist leaderships to take qualitative steps to coordinate their strategy more closely, while at the same time trying to disassociate their new plans and moves from the atrocities and failures of the Begin-Sharon era.

The agreement comes at a time when both the US and Israeli political and military strategies are bogged down in the quagmire that they have created in Lebanon. This is due to the heroic resistance of the Lebanese National Resistance Front, the Syrian forces and the Palestinian revolution, especially against the capitulationist May 17th Israeli-Lebanese accord. Having previously underestimated the obstacles they would encounter, Shamir and Reagan centered their talks on, in Shamir's words, "confronting the Soviet-supplied military build-up in Syria".

The idea of the political-military agreement between Washington and Tel Aviv is to send a clear signal to Syria and the Soviet Union that there is no gap between the US and Israeli strategy in the Middle East, and that US and Israeli interests are one and the same. This dispelled any illusions that the US was intending to depend less on 'Israel'. On the contrary, the role of the Zionist state as US imperialism's watchdog in the Middle East is broadened and given more strategic significance. In view of Reagan's intention to run for the US Presidency in 1984, reinforced cooperation with 'Israel' might give him the option of withdrawing the Marines, if this was needed to enhance his chance of reelection, without jeopardizing implementation of US policy in Lebanon. Already, there are discussions in US military circles to deploy some of the Marines closer to the Israeli occupation troops, while securing the rest on the 6th Fleet vessels.

The US decision to stockpile military equipment in 'Israel' and hold joint military maneuvers makes the Zionist state a forward base for the Rapid Deployment Force on its way to the Gulf. This is further proof that the organic link between Zionism and imperialism, and especially its military aspect, does not diminish over time, but grows stronger. The very existence of the Zionist state is rooted in this link, while at the same time the US needs a reliable fortress in an area as vital as the Middle East. Without lessening its dependence on 'Israel', current US imperialist policy dictates the presence of its own forces, as seen in Lebanon and the efforts to set up permanent military bases in the region. The 1983 strategic alliance agreement is an attempt to coordinate the historical Israeli role with US imperialism's increased emphasis on military intervention. At the same time, increased US military presence in the area increases the likelihood that a local conflict can explode into a regional one, threatening world peace. Simply stated, the US-Israeli agreement is a new declaration of war against the Arab masses, and a challenge to the forces of peace and progress all over the world.

US-Israeli declaration of war

While directed against all nationalist and progressive forces in the area, the current focus of increased US-Zionist cooperation is to break Syria's nationalist stand. During his visit to Washington, Arens was quoted as saying, "the possibility of a joint US-Israeli military action against Syria is a function of the extent of the challenge. If there were to be a military challenge, I suppose all options are open." Thus, it came as no surprise when US warplanes, on December 4th, for the first time in the Middle East conflict, staged a direct military attack on the armed forces of an Arab country (Syria). According to the *International Herald Tribune*, Dec. 5, a Pentagon spokesman confirmed that the raid was discussed with the NATO allies beforehand. This, coupled with Arens remarks, proves that the attack was premeditated. The timing of the US aggression against Syria is proof that it is directly applying its part of the agreement.

'Israel' - new NATO member?

While petitioning for more US aid, Shamir compared US aid to 'Israel' with greater expenditures for NATO. The comparison is also apt in terms of US-Israeli cooperation in Lebanon, for in reality the US is promoting an unofficial NATO venture under the cover of the Multinational Forces' mandate.

With the strategic alliance agreement, the Zionist state is overtly accentuating the role it has always occupied in imperialism's anti-communist strategy, globally and regionally. Accordingly, 'Israel' is given carte blanche to attack liberation movements in defense of US interests, on the pretext that they are the advance contingent of the 'Soviet invasion to come'. In reality, the strategic alliance agreement is directed against all the anti-imperialist forces indigenous to the area, and against the support they receive from the socialist community. It is a new litmus test for all the US 'peace' initiatives in the area, showing once again that these are primarily designed to keep the Zionist state as the strongest in the area, as the chosen way of insuring imperialist dominance.

'Israel' in Crisis

For 'Israel', the importance of the strategic alliance agreement is clear. The Zionist entity has been created, maintained and expanded by the use of force. Thus it needs a huge military force with the latest technology, backed up by a strong economy. 'Israel' cannot finance its expansionist ambitions or act as imperialism's 'big stick' in the Middle East without US aid. A large part of the agreement focused on more such aid.

Today more than ever, 'Israel' needs US aid. Since the invasion of Lebanon, it has been experiencing the worst economic crisis in its history, affecting all sectors of the population. The deteriorating economic conditions fuel the political dissent which emerged sharply with the 1982 invasion. In the past, 'Israel' could ignore such dissent because it was confined to a very small group, but today, it is spreading to a sizeable minority.

This crisis in turn threatens the demographic situation of the Zionist state. Because of its nature as a settler state, 'Israel' depends on immigration for survival. To fulfill its stated role as a problem-free homeland for the Jews of the world, it must appear as an attractive place in which to settle. Today the situation is not attractive due to the economic crisis, added to the Israeli military failure and daily losses in Lebanon. The Zionist state's reduced ability to attract new immigrants, coupled with increasing emigration, could, in the future, cause a shortage of manpower for new military adventures.

These developments are very alarming not only to the Zionist leadership, but to the US leaders as well. For 'Israel' to act at a moment's notice on behalf of US imperialism, its internal situation must be stable.

Seen in this perspective, the strategic alliance agreement, and the extra aid that flowed with it, mark the Reagan Administration's tangible re-endorsement of the Likud government. Legitimate arguments have been advanced that the US would prefer the return of the Labor Alignment to power. However, at present, these arguments pale in the light of the Reagan Administration's global stress on militarism. At present, the Reagan Administration is working to more closely link all foreign aid to US foreign policy objectives. This means ever increasing emphasis on military aid and exclusively to states that politically and in practice support US imperialism's global counterrevolutionary crusade. Increased aid to 'Israel', to alleviate the Likud's problems, falls in line with this.

Rewards for 'Israel'

As part of the strategic alliance agreement, the US agreed to give artificial respiration to the Israeli economy through an even broader range of economic and military aid. For one, the US agreed to negotiate a free-trade pact that would eliminate the 10-15% tax now imposed on imported Israeli textiles and wood products. US trade representative spokesman William Brock pointed out, "The US has no such arrangements with any other country". This will contribute to reducing the Israeli balance of trade deficit, which reached $2.94 billion in 1982, and is projected at $3.6-4 billion for 1983. However, the consequences of cheaper Israeli products competing with US products, in already recession-troubled US economy, can endanger more US workers' jobs.

The Reagan Administration also agreed to give 'Israel' $1.7 billion in military aid for the 1984 fiscal year that began on Oct. 1st. Half of this is to be repaid with interest, but the other $850 million will be given as arms grants. 'Israel' is also to receive $910 million in economic grants, which will be used to offset the repayment of previous arms loans. In 1985, 'Israel' is scheduled to receive $1.4 billion in military aid, all as a grant.

Israeli capacity to produce its own weaponry was also boosted with $550 million in US military credits to fund the development of the Lavie aircraft. Moreover, the Israeli arms industry will be allowed to share in the production of US weaponry, financed with US aid. The US also agreed to buy $200 million worth of Israeli military equipment, as well as products and raw materials worth 15% of the military aid to 'Israel' - amounting to $250 million.

Washington also lifted the suspension of cluster bombs to 'Israel', though Shamir did not pledge to sign an agreement to use them for defensive purposes only. Clearly, the US umbilical cord to the Zionist state allows it to continue its genocidal war against the Palestinian people and fulfill its hunger for Arab lands.

Arab reaction's dilemma

The US-Israeli agreement, as the overt formalization of the organic and privileged relationship which 'Israel' has with the US, places Arab reaction in a difficult position. In line with their class nature and ties with imperialism, the US clients can only acquiesce to this agreement, even though it complicates efforts to justify their policies in the eyes of the Arab masses. This dilemma led these regimes to be unclear in their position on the agreement. Even on the verbal level, their reaction was mild.

The reactionaries' dilemma poses problems to the US as well. Although the alliance with 'Israel' is the cornerstone of US Middle East strategy, this strategy cannot be fulfilled without the total participation of Arab reaction. At present US imperialism needs Arab reaction's help to revive the Reagan plan and apply Camp David throughout the area. The Israeli refusal to accept the US's providing advanced weaponry to Arab regimes and setting up a Jordanian strike force, were discussed at the Reagan-Shamir meetings without eliciting any change in the Israeli position. Instead, the strategic alliance agreement deals with this issue by raising the possibility of joint US-Israeli efforts to "protect" the Gulf oil fields. In this, 'Israel' has overlapping interests with US imperialism in ensuring the flow of oil to the capitalist world.

Countering Zionist-imperialist military cooperation

The PFLP has always contended that the number one enemy of the Palestinian and Arab people is world imperialism, led by the US, and that 'Israel' is its forward base in our area. The strategic alliance agreement makes this relationship official. To those who have defined the enemy primarily as 'Israel' the agreement serves notice that the US is an active party to the conflict in our area, and that Zionism can only be combated in the context of anti-imperialist struggle. The counter-force to escalated Zionist-imperialist cooperation is based on strengthening the alliance between the popular revolutionary forces and the nationalist regimes in the area. It must draw strategic strength from alliance with the socialist community, headed by the Soviet Union, as well as with liberation movements and progressive forces globally.

Zionist-imperialist strategic collaboration has international as well as regional aims. It is part of the US's global strategy, the same that installs new nuclear missiles in Europe and invades Grenada. Specifically, the agreement provides for 'Israel' increasing its role as imperialism's surrogate arms merchant by giving permission for it to sell weapons produced with US technology to third countries. It is natural and necessary that this be confronted by increased international solidarity in the anti-imperialist camp, as the only way to redress the balance of forces in favor of the people's victory over imperialism, Zionism and reaction. ●

PFLP 16th Anniversary — Mass Rally

On December 9th, the PFLP celebrated the 16th anniversary of its founding at a mass rally in Yarmouk camp, near Damascus, Syria. Over 10,000 people attended, most from various parts of Syria; some also came from Lebanon to celebrate the glorious occasion. The rally was held in an atmosphere of revolutionary joy with the masses chanting slogans in support of the Palestinian revolution and saluting the Front's 16 years of struggle. Among the honored guests attending were a broad spectrum of Palestinian leaders, several leaders of the Lebanese nationalist forces, representatives of progressive Arab organizations, and diplomatic representatives of many friendly countries.

Opening the celebration, the PFLP's dance troupe and band, *Al Ard (The Land)*, played music and performed the traditional Palestinian *debka* folkdance. Following the entertainment, there were speeches by three of the honored guests at the rally. The first was delivered by Tawfiq Salha, regional leader of the Arab Socialist Baath Party. The second speaker was Comrade Hadi Ahmad Nasser on behalf of the Yemeni Socialist Party. The third speaker was Comrade George Hawi, General Secretary of the Lebanese Communist Party. (See following pages for synopses of their speeches.) Then, amidst the cheering of the masses, Comrade George Habash, General Secretary of the PFLP, began the main speech, which follows in excerpt:

Comrade George Habash

We meet today to renew the promise to our Palestinian and Arab masses and our friends around the world, to continue the struggle until Zionism is eradicated from Palestine, and we establish a democratic state in all of Palestine, and a united, socialist, Arab society...

Today, the nature and objectives of the Zionist-imperialist attack in the area are clearer than ever before. I say this based on a set of evidence that shows the nature of the political situation we will be facing in the coming year. All of you heard about the recent visit of Shamir to Washington, about the strategic US-Israeli alliance, and the US and Israeli air raids that followed, against the positions of the Syrian forces, the Lebanese nationalists and the Palestinian revolution — present side-by-side on the confrontation line with the enemy.

This period witnesses a clear, inflexible US policy — intensification of Zionist-imperialist intransigence... What are the objectives of this attack? How can we stop it?

This attack aims to implement Camp David in the whole area. It aims to subjugate Syria, the Lebanese nationalist movement, the Palestinian revolution and every Arab country that stands firmly opposed to the imperialist plans. After imposing Camp David on the northern front (Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian revolution), US imperialism will turn to our comrades in Democratic Yemen in an attempt to destroy this bastion...Moreover, it will turn to Algeria, Libya and the entire Arab arena in order to make Camp David prevail, whereby imperialism and Zionism will be the masters of the area...

This is the challenge facing us this year and in the coming years. How each nationalist organization and regime combats this challenge will be the scientific measure for evaluating them... It is important to point out that in order to impose their objectives, US imperialism and Zionism need not use all their military might...While preparing for aggression, they are also employing other methods to subjugate the nationalist forces. If these fail, they will direct the painful blows...

The yardstick of nationalism

As nationalist, democratic and revolutionary forces, how can we confront this plan? What is the yardstick for judging the position of every regime, force and party?

First is a decisive political position to confront not only 'Israel', but also US imperialism, which is the primary supporter of 'Israel'. The yardstick of nationalism today is not to be anti-Israeli only, but mainly to be anti-US imperialism. If the Arab nation had been facing 'Israel' only, it would have been able to put a limit to Israeli aggression and defeat it...What makes 'Israel' so powerful is maximum and unconditional US aid — military, economic and political...Whoever wants to confront 'Israel' must combat US imperialism. From now on, we are not ready to describe any regime or party as nationalist on the basis of formal or verbal opposition to 'Israel'.

Some Arab regimes want to put on the veil of nationalism by having an anti-Israeli position, but the Arab people's long history shows this to be deception. He who is content to talk about combating 'Israel', without knowing that the real battle is with US imperialism, is not a nationalist.

Still some Arab regimes do not dare to deal with these facts. Why? I read the statement of Saudi Arabia on the International Solidarity Day with the Palestinian People. It says that 'Israel' is strong because there is a big power supporting it! Saudi Arabia does not dare to mention the name of this power...Arab reaction professes support to the Palestinian cause; meanwhile, all their money pours into the banks of imperialism, particularly the US. What kind of logic is this?

We do not expect these regimes to have a strategic alliance with the Soviet Union... The Soviet Union supports our cause politically, diplomatically and militarily, yet many Arab states do not have diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. What kind of Arabs are these? If these Arabs still think that the US holds "99% of the cards of the solution in the area", as expressed by Sadat, it is about time that the people and nationalist vanguards in these states present the solid facts — The US does not hold 99% of the cards.

In the historical perspective, the US is a declining power. Look at the movement of history...I remember very well during the 1936 revolt in Palestine, Britain was the Great Empire; the sun never set on its territories. Today Britain is a limited power. The same logic applies to the US. In 1945, US industrial

products constituted 50% of total world industrial production; in 1950, 40%; in 1960, 30%; by 1980, 25%. Note how the curve is declining. It is well known that the economic standard determines the political power of every country. In the beginning of the 1990's, the US gross product is expected to decline to 20%.

We should view history with this outlook and determine our policies accordingly. It is shameful that the US, the engineer of Camp David, has an increasing share of its exports to the Arab countries. The oil-producing countries import 10% of the US's total exports; half of this is to Saudi Arabia alone. Some might say that these are only numbers and not big, but I hope that you study them more deeply...

After determining the political position against US imperialism, it is imperative to practice this decision politically, militarily and economically. Here, permit me to salute the heroic action of the Syrian soldiers who shot down the US planes and thus enhanced the position of the Arab nation. Allow me also to salute the political leadership that gave orders to shoot down those planes, in spite of all Arab reaction's talk about US invincibility. With every US or Israeli plane shot down by Syria, more support will be gained, because our masses spontaneously understand where the main contradiction lies. They support the force which embodies their will.

We well understand the deceptive attempts of Arab reaction to dilute the Syrian position. Nevertheless, our great hope is that Syria will continue to defend the national cause — to shoot at the US planes and the aggressive Marine forces in Beirut.

We can confront the US forces. Why don't we do so, like the heroic people of Vietnam, Cuba and others did? In reality, our human, economic and military capacity enables us to confront them and finally win. Especially, we must remember that the alternative to confrontation is total subjugation. The Reagan Administration's politics are clear. Syria, the Lebanese national movement, the Palestinian revolution and all progressive and nationalist Arab forces have no choice but to be ready for a serious confrontation to bury this aggressive policy.

People's war

Having defined our position on imperialism and practicing this policy, our third weapon is blending people's war with the steadfastness of Syria and other nationalist regimes. There are two examples that clearly show the significance of this. The first is the steadfastness of Beirut, a historical experience from which the Arab nation can benefit in fighting imperialism and Zionism. The prolonged period of the siege provided an example of the importance of blending conventional warfare with people's war.

The second example is what is happening today in Lebanon...After the Palestinian resistance evacuated Beirut, a semi-collapse prevailed; there was a big shift in the balance of forces to the enemy's favor, added to the prevailing Arab situation. Yet in spite of all the difficulties and the depressing atmosphere, there were still vanguards saying: We will resist. Therefore, the Lebanese National Resistance Front was created, and 'Israel' began receiving the corpses of its soldiers. 'Israel', which had thought it emerged victorious from the war as a result of the PLO's evacuation, began to sense a new reality due to the heroic resistance. We should not only view the power of imperialism, its plans and successes. We should also clearly see our successes in steadfastness and in creating obstacles to imperialism's plans.

The examples of Beirut, the Lebanese National Resistance Front and the Lebanese national mass and political resistance exemplify the strength of this weapon. Our nation is not weak. On the contrary, it is strong if there is proper leadership making scientific political decisions and rallying the potentials of the masses according to these decisions.

Strengthening the triangle of steadfastness

In the process of confrontation, there is another weapon: Strengthening the national Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian alliance, resolving all its problems through dialogue, and concentrating on the main contradiction. Part of the enemies' bet is exploiting problems within this alliance. We must rise to the historic responsibility that faces us in this difficult period, in order to build a national Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian alliance that stands as a bulwark in the face of all plans woven by imperialism on the northern front, to confront US insistence on striking Syria.

The US media is full of the military options thought of in the White House and Pentagon; some think of occupying the southern outskirts of Beirut; others think the next step will be in the mountains; others advocate intensifying the air raids; still others are betting on the internal differences causing deficiencies... We have to abort this plan by strengthening the Syrian-Palestinian-Lebanese alliance. History shows no mercy. In ten years, it will record whether this Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian confrontation was victorious or the opposite.

One of the factors determining this is the subjective factor: How do we think? How do we determine our policies? How do we mobilize? How can we overcome the differences and problems inhibiting such a confrontation?

In the process of confrontation, we ought not to limit our thoughts to the Syrian-Lebanese-Palestinian alliance. Syria, the Lebanese national movement and the Palestinian revolution must specifically plan to build a broad Arab national front that supports them in this confrontation. Democratic Yemen, Algeria, Libya, the national movements in Egypt, Sudan, Morocco and the Arabian Peninsula must have a role in facing the challenge of imperialism. Finally, to face the US-Israeli alliance, there must be a principled, strategic alliance with the Soviet Union and the socialist countries...I do not emphasize this point as a result of underestimating the importance of the subjective factor, but based on a view of imperialism's global policy in this period. In order to be victorious, our alliance with the Soviet Union should develop to the extent that enables the forces of peace, liberation and socialism to achieve victory...

The next major section of Comrade Habash's speech dealt with strengthening the Palestinian revolution's role in the confrontation, through a correct resolution of the internal crisis in the PLO. We refer readers to the editorial and interview with Comrade Habash in this issue concerning the subject. Comrade Habash concluded by saluting the struggle of our people under occupation, the martyrs and prisoners and their families, and all those struggling everywhere...

We are extremely pleased to see our people in occupied Palestine determined to confront the occupation with all means-political, economic and military, despite being ruthlessly attacked and besieged by the Zionist enemy. Our masses in the occupied territories are facing not only the plots of the Zionist occupiers and their overt agents, but also those of the Jordanian regime and its clients, who are trying to exploit the difficult situation in the PLO for the purpose of imposing annexationist plans on our people. Moreover, the Jordanian regime is attempting to become the spokesman of the Palestinian people, bypassing the PLO, their sole, legitimate representative. In order to achieve this, all methods are used: the stick and the carrot, psychological warfare against our people in Jordan and the occupied homeland. Yet the will of our people is stronger than all these plots. They foiled them in the past and will also do so in the present and in the future, until achieving victory... ●

Lebanese Communist Party

Once again we gather to celebrate an occasion which is no longer reserved for those vanguards who initiated the PFLP, but has become the property of all Palestinian, Lebanese and Arab revolutionaries, and of the masses... When we celebrated last year, the misery was still evident on the faces of the militants after their imposed exodus from steadfast Beirut, from the struggling South and from the camps of Lebanon, as a result of the Zionist-US-reactionary offensive. Today, a year later, we meet in Damascus; many developments have occurred. Each time we think the confrontation with the Zionist-imperialist plot has reached a climax, we find another climax following. There is no limit to the depth of the conspiracy. More important, our steadfastness knows no limits either.

The Lebanese National Resistance Front is the shining side of the process of opposing US and Zionist hegemony... The mass uprising against the occupation has merged with the revolutionary gun of the LNRF. Another factor, no less important, is the steadfastness of all the patriots in Mount Lebanon, especially the Progressive Socialist Party led by Walid Jumblatt. These factors converged with the general atmosphere of Lebanese democratic nationalism which rejects fascist domination by the Phalangists, which is similar to the Zionist domination which caused the tragedy of Palestine.

These factors crystallize the overall Arab progressive will to confront the imposition of US-Zionist hegemony... The will of US imperialism is not fate. Nor is the Israeli occupation, and the presence of invading US forces, a victory for them. They have fallen into a trap, and we will inflict casualties on them until they are forced to withdraw unconditionally, whether they be the Israeli forces, the Multinational Forces, the US forces, or whatever name they choose.

Lebanese national steadfastness could not have achieved what it has, were it not for other factors of steadfastness in the Arab nation, specifically Syria. I consider that the Syrian decision and Syrian-Soviet relations have taken a qualitative turn and thus enabled the steadfast forces to raise their voices higher in the face of the US-Israeli-reactionary plot.

Therefore, US-Zionist and NATO threats have been launched against Syria, added to the intimidating overflights of the US fighter planes which, for one of the first times, an Arab leader gave orders to shoot down...

After Beirut, the Palestinian revolution had to stop and make a serious evaluation of its organizational, military and political course, for it had paid the price of being the vanguard in confronting the imperialist-Zionist-reactionary plots...

There was a step forward with the proposals of groups in the Palestinian revolution, including in the vanguard organization, Fatah, to seriously study political and organizational reform in order to revive the revolution...The strengthening of relations between the Democratic and Popular Fronts and the formation of the joint political-military command was another positive step.

The Popular Front has accustomed us to giving specific answers at historical turning points, and we now stand on the threshold of a most dangerous turning point in the history of the Arab national liberation movement...The Palestinian role in this direction meets the requirements of a broader Arab mass uprising. There are indications of such an uprising - the improvement of joint action between the Arab communist parties and other forces of the Arab liberation movement, indications of broader popular struggle in more than one Arab country...

By starting to prepare ourselves for the real confrontation, we are loyal to the Palestinian and Lebanese blood which has irrigated Lebanon. Moreover, we preserve the unity of the Palestinian decision and restore the joint struggle between the Lebanese national movement and the Palestinian revolution. We unite the Arab liberation movement and advance it to a higher level of confrontation. ●

Yemeni Socialist Party

Today we celebrate with you the 16th anniversary of the establishment of the PFLP. I am pleased to convey our militant, comradely congratulations on behalf of Comrade Ali Nasser Mohammad, General Secretary, and the Central Committee of the Yemeni Socialist Party, to the PFLP leadership and all the fighters and masses. Our participation in this celebration reflects the strong militant ties between you and our party.

All guns against the enemy

The 16th anniversary of the PFLP comes at a very difficult and critical time. The imperialist-Zionist-reactionary attack is intensified in the Arab area. Speaking frankly, we cannot say that the momentum of this attack is only due to the political and military capacity of the enemy forces. It is also a result of the weaknesses and shortcomings of many groups of the Arab national liberation movement. Some have resorted to arms to resolve secondary differences, whereas all guns should be directed against the Zionist enemy and US imperialism, that are mobilizing their fleets off the Lebanese coast, spreading their forces and those of NATO in Lebanon, and continuing to attack the positions of the Syrian forces and the Lebanese nationalists and progressive forces.

Our major battle is against US imperialism, Zionism and the fascist forces in Lebanon. On this occasion, we affirm our party's position, calling for an end to the fighting among Palestinians and for using nationalist, democratic dialogue to resolve the differences, preserve Palestinian national unity in the PLO, strengthen the role of its legitimate institutions which express the will of the Palestinian people, and continue the struggle until victory, obtaining the Palestinian people's inalienable rights, in particular the right to return, self-determination and establishing an independent state. In this context, we hold in high esteem the role played by the PFLP, in the Joint Leadership with the DFLP, to stop the fighting and enforce democratic dialogue, in order to achieve the Program of Unity and Reform in the PLO.

On this occasion, permit me to express our support to Syria in its confrontation of the Zionist-imperialist aggression. All our Arab people and their nationalist and progressive forces stand by Syria, as do the forces of liberation and progress, especially the Soviet Union, our strategic ally.

We see the necessity of firmly confronting the US military presence by all means, including striking US imperialist interests and intensifying the national democratic struggle of all the Arab people.

We in Democratic Yemen pledge to strengthen the role of our progressive regime in order to decisively combat all forms of aggression and conspiracies against our sovereignty and national independence. Moreover, we pledge to participate with all our capacity in the struggle of the Arab national liberation movement against imperialism, Zionism and reaction. ●

Arab Socialist Baath Party

Today we celebrate a very significant occasion: the 16th anniversary of the establishment of the PFLP, a revolutionary nationalist organization that has contributed many militant fighters and heroic martyrs to the Palestinian revolution. The Front therefore deserves the full respect of strugglers everywhere...

This celebration comes as the Arab nation is passing through a most dangerous and significant juncture in its confrontation with its enemies. At this moment, conspiracies are escalating through the aggressive imperialist plans in the area. These plans began with the Sinai agreement, then the Camp David accords, and culminated in US imperialism's move from threatening Arab national security to direct military intervention in Lebanon against the Syrian and Lebanese nationalist forces. This aggression is the direct result of the recently declared strategic alliance between the US and 'Israel'. This alliance aims to subjugate the Arab world to US-Israeli hegemony, rob what remains of Arab resources and isolate the Arab nation from its friends -the socialist community and national liberation movement of the world...

Our position on the Palestinian question, our central cause, is a firm, ideological one. Our commitment to the Palestinian revolution, led by the PLO, the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, is principled and consistent. No deviationist or capitulationist can distort this solid position. We are for the unity of Fatah and of the PLO, and for ending the internal differences through democratic dialogue, based on strengthening the nationalist political program. We in Syria, as always, are for the unity of the revolution and against any attempt to liquidate it politically or militarily. Based on this, we support the independent decision that confronts the Zionist-US imperialist enemy...

US imperialism and its agents in the area should know that the Arab world will not be a farm or a deserted field for its forces. Moreover, Syria, while confronting the US-Zionist attack, is not alone. It is supported by a solid, internal popular front, the Arab masses, all freedom fighters in the world and their vanguard, the socialist camp and the Soviet Union. In due time, the US and its agents will know that Arab Syria is not to be swallowed at will. ●

Anniversary Celebrations

Lebanon

A mass meeting was held in Akar-Beqaa, attended by a large number of Palestinian and Lebanese people and political leaders. Comrade Salah Salah of the PFLP's Politbureau delivered the main speech, stressing the following: the unity of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses is not just a slogan, but rather a reality manifest in the heroic steadfastness against the Zionist enemy. On the international level, he emphasized that US imperialism is the Palestinian people's main enemy, while the Soviet Union is the Palestinian revolution's strategic ally.

In Nahr al Bared camp outside Tripoli, a celebration was held. Large numbers of the Palestinian and Lebanese masses in the area attended, as did representatives of the Palestinian resistance organizations and the Lebanese national movement. Comrade Mahdi spoke on behalf of the Lebanese Communist Party, saying, "The establishment of the PFLP marked the start of the revolutionary conviction in the importance of the role of the working class in the Palestinian revolution." Concerning Lebanon, he emphasized that, "Imperialism is following a dangerous course in the area. The collaboration of imperialism and Zionism to change the balance of power in favor of the fascists' program will not succeed." In conclusion, he spoke of the importance of the unity steps between the PFLP and DFLP.

Comrade Abu Taib, PFLP Politbureau member, saluted the masses and the prisoners in occupied Palestine in the name of the PFLP-DFLP Joint Leadership. In his speech, he addressed the importance of the Arab nationalist regimes elevating their relations with the Soviet Union in order to counter the imperialist plans in the region.

Democratic Yemen

In Aden, a major celebration was held. Along with the diplomats of friendly countries and representatives of national liberation movements, a large crowd of Palestinians and Yemenis gathered to celebrate the PFLP's 16th anniversary.

The first speaker was Comrade Mahmoud al Najhe on behalf of the Yemeni Socialist Party. He emphasized that Democratic Yemen stands with the Palestinian struggle against imperialism and Zionism, and called for democratic dialogue to resolve internal differences.

From among the representatives of socialist countries, the Cuban ambassador spoke, saying, "We are proud to stand in solidarity with your people's struggle. Also a message was read by the vice-deputy director of the PLO office in Aden, which said, "Your establishment marked a very important stage in the development of the Palestinian revolution."

Finally, Comrade Malouh spoke on behalf of the PFLP, thanking Democratic Yemen for its unconditional support to the Palestinian revolution. He stressed that the Palestinian revolution must not return to internal armed conflict, but must correct deviations within the PLO and attain collective leadership, and build close relations with the Syrian regime which is challenging imperialism's plans in our area. He concluded by saluting the Palestinian people under occupation and also the fighters of the Palestinian revolution and the Lebanese nationalist forces. ●

'Israel' in Latin America

This study was presented at a symposium in Cuba, arranged by the International Secretariat for Solidarity with the Arab People and their Central Cause, Palestine.

The importance of the Israeli military role in Latin America can be traced back to imperialism's defeat in Vietnam, which for a time diminished the US's capacity to intervene directly against popular struggles in the three continents. US imperialism was forced to devise new plans for implementing its policies effectively but more quietly, without having to face the public dissent which prevailed during its involvement in Southeast Asia. To this purpose, the US needed a reliable surrogate, a force with advanced military experience and whose interests paralleled its own. The natural candidate was the Zionist state.

In Latin America, 'Israel' immediately picked up the slack by increasing the supply of military equipment and advisors sent to reactionary states to a veritable flood by the early eighties. Starting in the mid-seventies, a squadron of Dagger aircraft and Gabriel rockets were sold to Argentina; 150 Shafrir missiles to Chile; Super-mysteres and Kfir C2 combat jets to Honduras - all regimes condemned by the world community for gross violation of human rights. The Zionist state engaged in training the internal security forces of El Salvador and Panama. From 1976, 'Israel' was responsible for supplying almost all the military needs of the Guatemala dictatorship until January this year, when the Reagan Administration resumed direct military aid to Rios Montt's regime. In Mexico, 'Israel' has established a licensed assembly plant for Arava aircraft, planes suitable for counterinsurgency. High-tech military equipment poured into the hands of many reactionary governments.

It is no coincidence that the Israeli military role in Latin America escalated parallel to the ascendence of the military juntas, and became even more apparent with the resurgence of the liberation struggle in the area, heralded by the Nicaraguan revolution. The main function of Israeli military aid to Latin American has, of course, been counterinsurgency. Moreover, today Israeli arms serve to heighten tension in the area in line with US imperialism's increasingly aggressive policy and renewed willingness to intervene directly. Israeli involvement in the US's "backyard" clearly shows Zionism's organic link and common interests with imperialism. 'Israel' is directly participating in the efforts to embolden Latin American dictators, as was echoed in the remark of General Gustava Alvarez of Honduras that his country needs a preemptive strike against Nicaragua the way 'Israel' did against the PLO. The Israeli government has proven before the international community that it is totally faithful to the imperialist cause and has no qualms about supporting regimes in Latin America which have murdered hundreds of thousands of their own citizens in recent years.

'Israel' in Central America

In this paper, we will allow ourselves to concentrate on Central America, for it is there that the Israeli role became most visible starting in the mid-seventies - dramatically exposed by the victory of the Sandinista revolution.

In fact, the Carter Administration's so-called human rights policy can hardly be understood in isolation from the role of 'Israel' as an imperialist surrogate. Faced with public criticism of the US role in maintaining the brutal Somoza dictatorship, Congress cut off military aid to Nicaragua. Thus, US imperialism tried to save face, but in Nicaragua, as in other Latin American countries, the US could not have pretended to implement a policy based on human rights criteria, if not for the fact that 'Israel' moved in to shoulder the task of arming the exposed dictatorships. After the victory of the Sandinista revolution, it was revealed that 98% of Somoza's military equipment had come from the Zionist state.

Today, the US and 'Israel' continue to conspire against the Nicaraguan people by attempting to topple their revolutionary government. An article in *Washington Post* earlier this year revealed a new instance of US-Israeli cooperation to this effect. The two are working on a multimillion dollar settlement plan in Costa Rica, along the border with Nicaragua. This plan calls for settling and supporting up to 1,000 families on land along the border. The US agency AID, notorious for links with CIA projects, has agreed to finance the project with at least $10 million in the first year alone. 'Israel' provides technical expertise, based on its experience with settlements in occupied Palestine, especially the West Bank, where private enterprise plays an increasingly prominent role in colonization. The Israeli firm, TAHAL, is providing engineers who have been involved in the project from the start.

It is interesting to note that this settlement project was begun at the same time as the US started the large-scale military maneuvers - Big Pine - along the Honduran-Nicaraguan border. This is one indication that the settlement project in Costa Rica has a place in the US military plans for the area. The aim is to create strategic pinchers that would physically isolate Nicaragua, and serve as bases for the counterrevolutionaries' sabotage. The settlement project is hard to justify otherwise, for Costa Rica has no serious overpopulation problem that necessitates resettling people in border areas. A US administration official acknowledged that AID would never have given an economically risky project the go-ahead, if it weren't for the political implications. US ambassador to Costa Rica, McNeil, also acknowledged this fact, saying in a confidential cable: "It is essential that the land purchase be expeditiously and quietly carried out to... avoid land invasion by leftist rebels which would nullify the project's geopolitical objectives".

This is not the first time the Zionists engage in settlement building in the Western Hemisphere. In Guatemala, in addition to having sent over 300 advisers, 'Israel' has promoted the regime's counterinsurgency efforts by providing the expertise for so-called development projects. This entailed the physical elimination and transfer of the Indian inhabitants of certain areas, and the establishment of kibbutz-like colonies in an effort to deprive the guerrilla movement of their mass base.

In a recent chapter of the US - Zionist conspiracy against the people of Latin America and the Middle East, the Zionist state, at US request, sent massive shipments of PLO weapons captured in Lebanon, to Costa Rica, to arm the CIA sponsored contras for their attacks on Nicaragua.

Renewed focus on El Salvador

From 1972 to 1977, the Zionist state supplied the regime in El Salvador with 81% of its weaponry. In this period, 'Israel' also began sending military advisors to the country. The recent

announcement that 'Israel' will provide military and security aid, estimated to run at $81 million in this year, to the regime marks a renewal and escalation of Israeli intervention in El Salvador's civil war. Also, the Israeli embassy is scheduled to reopen in San Salvador, as the result of the August meeting in Jerusalem between Begin and a high-ranking Salvadorean delegation. The regime will reciprocate by moving its embassy to Jerusalem, in a clear sign of political support to the Zionist annexation. The Israeli embassy in San Salvador was closed in 1979, after an escalation of political violence in the country. Since the war in the country has only widened since that time, the explanation for the reopening is the new priority Zionism has assigned to El Salvador, in order to hold the reactionary forces in power against the steady advance of the Farabundo Marti revolutionaries. It is perhaps redundant to note that the increased Israeli focus on El Salvador comes at a time when the Reagan Administration is facing rising domestic opposition to its role there and to its once 'secret' war against Nicaragua.

When the thread of the Israeli arms industry that is woven between US foreign policy and Latin America is unraveled, the logic and true motives of imperialist policy world - wide become obvious. Israeli and US actions in Latin America exemplify the mechanism of expansion and intervention that are landmarks of imperialism and Zionism. Israeli arms trade in Latin America is but a modification of its aggression and expansion in the Middle East.

US-Israeli cooperation in the arms market

Since 1971, 'Israel' has emerged as a major manufacturer and exporter of arms, not only to Latin America, but to other countries as well. According to statistics gathered by the CIA, 'Israel' placed first in arms exports to Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa, and fifth in the world market in 1980 (ADC "Israel's Arms Exports" Background Paper no. 8, ADC Research Institute). This amazing growth was accomplished during the years 1970-80, when 'Israel' increasingly militarized and strengthened its economy by boosting its arms industry. Since the Likud took power in 1977, arms exports have seen a six - fold increase from $425 million to nearly $2 billion.

During a visit to Honduras in December 1982, then Defense Minister Sharon made a deal for the Israeli military industries that included 12 Kfir combat jets and 50 advisors, yielding $25 million for the Israeli economy. In the same period, Reagan chose Honduras as the base of intervention against the revolutionaries in El Salvador and Nicaragua. Within the realm of close US - Israeli cooperation, Israeli advisors will assist both US and Honduran troops in anti-insurgent warfare, and impart the tactics used in Lebanon against Palestinian and Lebanese fighters and civilians. Military strategy and 'secrets' are an integral part of the Israeli arms trade; like the weapons themselves, these are battle-tested, due to Zionism's long history of aggression.

Israeli expertise stands behind the May opening of a munitions factory in Guatemala under the auspices of the army there. As pointed out in *Gramna* newspaper, Havana, October 30th, "The Israeli presence as a regional arms manufacturer based in Guatemala serves to greatly shorten supply and communications lines along the puppet armies of the United States now coordinated in the Central America Defense Council (CONDECA). We must stress that one of the important decisions adopted by CONDECA military commanders at their recent meeting in Guatemala was to supply all Central American armies (with the exception of Nicaragua) with a single type of weapon and ammunition. The idea clearly hinges on supplies of Israeli weapons made in Guatemala".

'Israel' has made other deals that have helped the US implement its policy in Central America. When there was an apparent impasse in the US Congress about which regime should receive the "scarce" US allocations available, 'Israel' suggested that the US allow certain Latin American countries to spend part of their military credits with 'Israel', thus reducing the outright grants of military aid to 'Israel' at a time when public opinion was against the Israeli aggression in Lebanon. As reported by the Israeli daily *Davar* in March 1982, 'Israel' had already allowed the US to divert $21 million earmarked for the Zionist state to Salvador's army, thus bypassing Congressional attempts to limit military funding to this notoriously brutal army. The 'concession' on the part of the Zionists, however, was made on the condition that the funds would be 'repaid' at a later date. Repayment could come in the form of a larger share of the arms market in Latin America, less restrictions on arms trade generally, or outright military grants as in the past. Political repayment should not be ruled out either, using these arrangements to further annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Strategic alliance

The key to Israeli reliability as a US surrogate lies in the fact that Zionist interests in these endeavors are equal to those of the US. 'Israel' can be doubly efficient in the business of counterrevolution, because it is not a mere puppet, but a state whose very nature endows it with vital interests in ensuring imperialist domination around the globe.

The arms trade entails political as well as economic advantages for the Zionist state. In 1981, then Israeli Defense Minister Sharon outlined a policy aimed at using the demands for arms to secure not only dollars, but political and diplomatic advantage as well, for example, by getting countries to move their embassies to Jerusalem.

The economic advantages are, however, even more crucial. Moshe Mandelbaum, governor of the Bank of Israel, said: "Only one factor saved Israel from economic collapse, and that is its arms trade".

In this decade of militarization, 'Israel' gained new advantages for its marketing strategy, opened through the strategic cooperation with the US. The agreements with Liberia, reached in August of this year, are a recent example of this, as is the arms sale to Latin America dictatorships. In August 1981, the Israeli Minister Meridor outlined the relationship in market terms: "We say to the Americans, ▶

Liberals Exposed

The close cooperation between the US and 'Israel' on the arms market poses a dilemma for certain liberal US Congressmen who battle against US interventionism in Central America, yet whole heartedly embrace the Zionist state. The contradiction between posing as the champions of human rights on the one hand, yet supporting Israeli actions at all costs, should not escape the American public's attention for long. Unfortunately, up until recently, not enough opposition has been generated to this two - faced position taken by such Senators as Edward Kennedy and US Representative Steven Solarz. However, during the August 27th March on Washington to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the famous speech by Martin Luther King, Israeli involvement in arming Guatemala was given prominent attention by several speakers. It was notable also that the American Jewish Congress (which is Zionist - dominated) refused to be a part of the coalition that sponsored the march, giving the reason that the goals diverted too much from the goals in 1963.

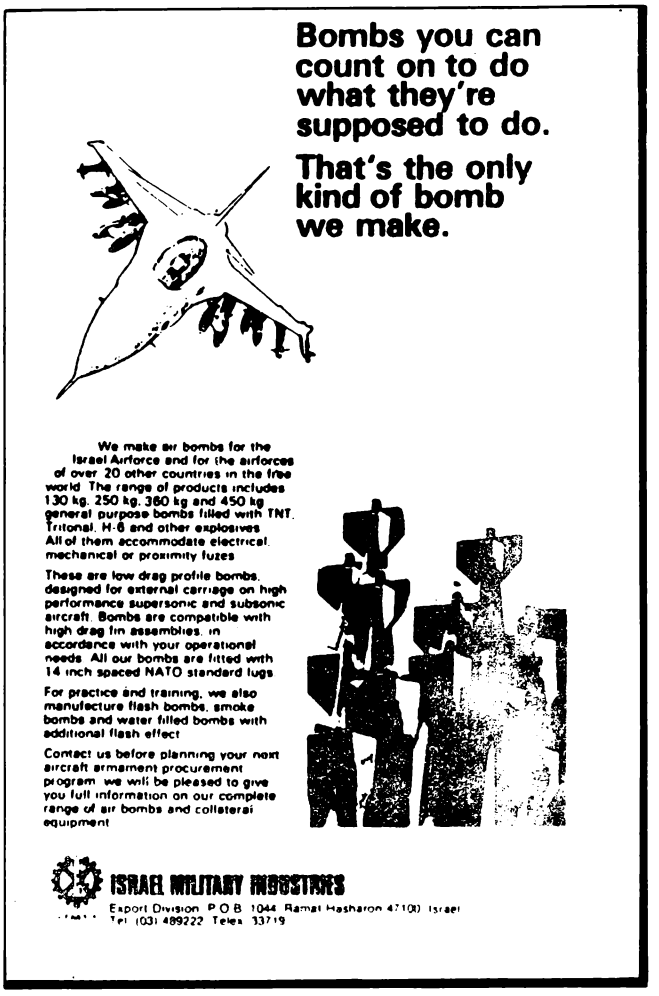
don't compete with us in the Caribbean... or in other areas which (sic) we can sell directly. Let us do it. Sell the ammunition and the equipment using an accredited representative, Israel will be your accredited representative" (*Ha'aretz*, Israeli daily).

The Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Cooperation, signed by the US and 'Israel' in 1981, formalized US-Israeli military coordination. Concerted US support to the 1982 invasion of Lebanon and the continuing Israeli occupation of Lebanese, Palestinian and Syrian land, has shown that the formal suspension of this memorandum had no meaning, for after all, it had only put down in writing the close working relationship that has long existed. The Zionist role in Latin America shows that 'Israel' can be counted on to safeguard imperialism's strategic interests and objectives when international and domestic outcry against human rights violations makes US initiatives vis-a-vis certain regimes more difficult. The strategic cooperation memorandum gives the possibilities of joint military ventures "outside the Mediterranean zone". These were code words for more Israeli involvement in Latin America and also Africa. Article 3.2.D. of the memorandum paves the way for third countries receiving US foreign military sales credits to use these for purchasing defense items and services from 'Israel'. This privilege accorded to the Zionist entity is unprecedented in the history of US foreign policy, and not even given to the NATO allies.

In the context of the greater global role which it has assumed and as part of boosting its economy, the Zionist state has diversified and upgraded the type of weaponry which it manufactures and markets. In the early seventies, 'Israel' made mostly light weapons and munitions, but today it has expanded into heavy arms such as the Merkava tanks and the proposed Lavie fighter jets. This is closely related to the ever increasing militarization of the Israeli economy, for such heavy production tends to employ a greater number of industrial workers than did the concentration on light arms industry. In 1982, about 40,000 Israelis were employed in the arms industry. This constituted about 14% of the industrial labor force. In 1981, the Israeli arms industry accounted for 40% of total Israeli exports.

The importance of the arms industry for the Israeli economy also has social effects, just as it does in the United States. A large proportion of the labor force needs this employment and thus identifies with militarism, blinded to the dangers engendered by such a monsterous arms industry. The population is also susceptible to chauvinist and racist demagogy, whether spouted by Reagan or Begin or now Shamir, which aims to justify using this weaponry against civilians, whether in Palestine, Lebanon, El Salvador, Guatemala, etc.

One may ask how 'Israel', as a small state with great economic problems and one of the highest inflation rates in the world, can produce and export such a huge quantity of these destructive products. The answer lies in the nature of the Zionist state and its organic link with imperialism, especially the US. Just as the Zionist entity is an artificial state, that would never have been established or survived without enormous outside aid, so is the Israeli arms industry a baby of imperialism. Imperialism financed the Zionist state first to be used as the beachhead for expanding imperialist control in the Middle East. Today, its zone of military tasks is truly global. Facts and figures indicate the importance which US imperialism attaches to 'Israel' as a surrogate implementer of its strategy. In the last 10 years, US aid to 'Israel' (military and economic) has been over $22.5 billion, according to the US General Accounting Office's preliminary study released August 27, 1982. The study states that US aid to 'Israel' has averaged more than $2.5 billion annually for a decade. This flood of assistance is often given as grants or in the form of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long-term, interest-free loans, which are often never repaid, but covered by the next aid package. This assistance played a key role in allowing 'Israel' to develop its own arms industry and become one of the world's leading arms merchants.

Imperialism's ultimate repayment comes through 'Israel' carrying out assignments which the US finds inconvenient to execute itself. Indeed, 'Israel' can do what the US cannot at certain times, due to the restraints imposed by public pressure or Congressional hesitation. Moreover, due to its aggressive nature, the Zionist state has cultivated a reputation for battle-tested weapons. A slogan which appeared in newspapers all over the world boasts that 'Israel' "makes bombs that do what they are supposed to do". In Zionist terminology, battle - tested means that the vacuum and phosphorous bombs in question have been used on civilians in Beirut apartment buildings, or on non-conventional armies, i.e., popular movements, like the PLO forces in Lebanon. The invasion of Lebanon was a test of world opinion regarding the use of highly insidious anti-personnel weapons, such as cluster bombs and napalm, in urban warfare. Furthermore, the Israelis have stated that "more ingenious adjustments were made (on the weapons used in Lebanon), but those adaptations remain a military secret" (*Los Angeles Times*, July 10, 1983). In any case, they are not a secret to the Pentagon any longer, nor to a series of Latin American dictatorships, whose record for mass killing and torture against their own people qualifies them as future users of such weaponry. Though democratic forces the world over have protested the use of such weapons in the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, and have spoken out against human rights violations in Latin America, this protest must grow much more forceful if we are to avoid new battle-testing on the peoples of the Middle East, Latin America and Africa. ●

Anti-Zionist Interviews

The following are interviews made with anti-Zionist Jews at the UN International Conference on the Question of Palestine, September 1983, in Geneva. The first is with Uri Davis, who revolted against the reality he experienced growing up in the Zionist state. The second is with Alfred Lilienthal, who rejected the tyranny of world Zionism as exercised in the United States. The viewpoints expressed in the two interviews are not identical; nor do we agree on every point. However, we greatly value the ideas contained in the interviews, both in terms of exposing Zionism, and as contributions to a dialogue on how joint Arab-Jewish struggle can be realized for the sake of a democratic Palestine.

Alfred Lilienthal
"Israel's Flag is not Mine"

For over thirty years, Alfred Lilienthal has been one of the leading Jewish critics of Zionism in the US. He has lectured in 300 universities and some 250 cities around the country, each time facing local Zionists' attempts to cancel his lecture, because of their fear of a Jew speaking out against Zionism. Being so outspoken has put him in the center of controversy, and finally led to his being excommunicated from the Jewish faith by a group of rabbis on the grounds of lack of loyalty to 'Israel'. He is the author of *What Price Israel?*, published in 1953, one of the best known books written by a non - Arab on the question of Palestine, which has sold well over a million copies in the Arab world. His other works include *There Goes the Middle East, The Other Side of the Coin* and *The Zionist Connection.* Alfred Lilienthal has visited the Middle East no less than 23 times. The following is excerpts of our interview with him.

As an American anti-Zionist Jew, can you give our readers an idea of how you see the Zionist movement and ideology, and why you are anti-Zionist?

I am anti-Zionist because Zionism has attempted to replace the faith of the religion into which I was born, Judaism, with a narrow, nationalist, chauvinist movement of a political nature. This disregards the basic principles of Judaism. Number one: Without righteousness and justice, there is no Judaism. I am not the most religious person in the world; I have respect for my religion, and I believe that Zionism is trying to replace Judaism. Number two: Zionism is trying to push a double loyalty on me. I am an American; my only loyalty is to America. Zionism says: Even if it is against the best interests of the US, you have to support Israel. I resent their political tyranny of trying to saddle me with a double loyalty and trying to speak in my name, saying that all Jews are Zionists, and that if you're not a good Zionist, you're not a good Jew; therefore, we speak in your name, we can decide the political policies; we can decide when Israel is right or wrong; you're just a follower; if you are a Jew, then you follow the rabbi, you follow the Jewish law...There was something that rebelled in me. I don't know what the lord inspired in me, but I picked up my pen and wrote: Israel's flag is not mine. Once I did that, I put myself in a very difficult and controversial position, and I have since been fighting to prove I was right...

How do you see the distinction between Zionism and Judaism?

Zionism is a political movement which really started in 1893, when Theodor Herzl wrote his book *Den Judenstat (The Jewish state).* Then five years later, in Basel, the first Zionist Congress (was held), whose goal was to recreate a Jewish state.

Judaism is a relationship between man and God, nothing to do with politics; it requires no loyalty to any state. If you don't believe in any state, you still can believe in Judaism, which is a set of ethical concepts and principles -justice, righteousness, belief in one god, relationship between man and God, man and man, and not between man and state; that is political. Therefore, in order to be a good Jew, one does not have to be a good Zionist. As a matter of fact, the basic ethics of Judaism have been flouted by Zionism in their treatment of the Palestinians, in their aggressive wars....

Does that mean that the Jews all over the world don't constitute a nation?

I don't think they constitute 156 nations They are citizens in the countries in which they live. The Jews are not (a nation). This concept is wrong in many ways. Zionists, echoed by Begin, say we must go home; Judea and Samaria are ours. This overlooks the basic fact that the overwhelming majority of Jews in the world never came from the holy land. They are the result of conversions of people, foreign to the holy land, who wanted to practice a religion based on one god. The only religion at that time based on one god was Judaism, so they adopted Judaism. They may have been in Afghanistan; they may have been in South America, wherever. They were not a nationalist, ethnic group. This myth that Begin and the Zionists have tried to sell the world is totally false and wrong.

This means that those Jews who lived in Palestine before the ▶

Zionist aggression are part of the Palestinian people, like the Christians and Moslems. This is what the PLO states. Do you agree?

Yes, that's right.

The Zionist movement is very influential among Jews in America, yet you and many others are anti-Zionist. What kind of activities can be done to limit the Zionists' role and increase that of anti-Zionists?

It is very difficult to reach the Jews in America through Jewish organizations. They have been closed to me. I'll be very frank: They won't debate. They recognize me as a great evil force and will have nothing to do with me, won't allow me to have meetings and so on. What I have done is by publicizing my viewpoint through books and articles. Particularly, I have done alot of radio interview shows. Through these things I have kept the idea of basic anti-Zionism and true Judaism alive, both to Jews and Christians. Don't forget, when we think of the word Zionists, too many people immediately think that Zionists are Jews. All Jews are not Zionists, and all Zionists are not Jews. There are many Christian Zionists. They believe in this idea; they believe in the ethnic identity of the Jew, but they are not Jews. They give support for their own motivations, their own reasons.

What is your view of the strategic solution for the Palestinian and Jewish problem in the Middle East?

The solution sounds complex, but is very simple. The solution we are talking about is not the practical one - what will happen tomorrow, but the ideal solution which will happen one day; that is the two states solution - a Palestinian state coexisting side - by - side with a state of Israel, but a state of Israel which normalizes, de - Zionizes itself, a state made up of Jews with Israeli nationalism, not with world - wide Jewish nationalism. This is very important, if you understand the distinction. This state will say, we are a state of Israelis. When you ask a person in Israel today what he is, he right away says, I am a Jew. He doesn't mean in terms of religion either; he means in terms of nationality. In my kind of state, if you ask a Jew or a Muslim or a Christian in the ideal state of Israel, he will say, I am an Israeli. There won't be any such thing as a Jew as a nationality. In the Palestine state to be, the Jews that remain there will receive equal treatment; the Muslims and Christians that remain in the state of Israel, will remain as Christian and Muslim Israelis. There will be Jewish Israelis, who are Jews by religion only. The idea of a nation, based on an ethnic nationality of Jews, goes out the window.

Do you think that this two states solution satisfies the Palestinians' national rights to their country?

I think it would satisfy as long as they realize that the first step will be a two states solution...Maybe there will have to be a combination of steps...The second step is that the state of Israel must change its basic nature, for it's not only its geographical expansionism, it's its ideological expansionism, which views Jews throughout the world as people who must come to Israel or aid Israel and its political problem. You have this abnormal relationship between a small number of Jews in Israel and all the Jews outside.

How do you think that Israel can change its basic structure?

This will have to come from Israelis and with the quiet prodding of the US which always took the view that Israel's ultra - nationalism, that extends beyond its borders, is something they wouldn't recognize. Mostly it has to come through an educational process in which American Jews will insist to Israeli Jews, saying: We are Americans, and you have to give up this fallacious idea that a Jew is a Jew by way of nationality rather than religion.

It appears today that there is no possibility of 'Israel' changing by itself...

No, it can't; it won't do it by itself. It has got to be done by outside pressure from Jews who understand the problem and the dangers which Israel's peculiar nationalism is causing to world peace. You are right; it cannot come from within the state.

Only through pressure from Jews outside, or also from the Palestinians?

Everybody. Oh yes, no question about it; that is why I have asked the drafting committee to put into its basic statement that we believe that Zionism is not Judaism, Judaism is not Zionism, and that to be anti - Zionist is in no way to be anti-Semitic.

Do you see the US as responsible for the Sabra - Shatila massacre?

The US is responsible in several ways. There is no question that at least Secretary of State Haig knew beforehand of the war that was going to be waged by Israel. He had a number of warnings and was probably aware of the exact date that Israel was going to strike. So there is responsibility in that direction, responsibility in giving unlimited arms, in joining in their malicious press attack whenever possible on the PLO, and then the continued flow of arms and money to Israel. It meant that we do have a responsibility and a double responsibility after Habib made an agreement with Yasir Arafat, that in return for Arafat leaving Beirut and avoiding a slaughter, they would protect the women, children and old men who remained behind, and the families of the fighters. We betrayed the Palestinians in our promises. The open-handed, unrealistic, continued flow of arms, money, rewards, and sympathy to Israel after it was all over, shows our grave culpability for what took place in Lebanon. A lot of Americans feel deeply about this, but the problem is that there is no group in America that is bringing all this opinion to the top.

How do you evaluate the US role in Lebanon, especially after the Marines have directly intervened in the civil conflict, with US helicopters attacking West Beirut a few days ago?

The American people won't tolerate it. I have warned. I put it in the congressional record. This is the daily paper on congressional proceedings, and sometimes you can get a congressman to put in a private article or paper. If you go back to 1975, I put into the record an article "The Middle East - Our Next Vietnam". I think, God forbid, that may be happening now.

Do you want to say a final word to the Palestinian people?

Yes, I don't want them to give up on any branch of the human race in their struggle, and to remember that there are many Jews, many of whom won't speak up yet, but who talk quietly in utter horror...Many Jews have paid a price for their staunch support of justice in the Palestinian case.

When we think it's dark here and we

despair, I always remember my very fond memories of Palestine. I fought in World War II and was in Palestine when it was still Palestine (in 1944 - 45). It was a beautiful country. Since then, I have visited the West Bank, and I have some dear friends there. Whenever I think of brave people, I don't think there ever was a man braver than Bassam Shakaa...

The history of the Palestinian people has not yet finished. People have come back. As Chairman Arafat said, the last ten meters are the hardest. Just when everything looks dark, something breaks through, so long as you have principles behind you. If there ever was a stronger case, backed by principle and right, than the Palestinian, I have not seen one. At the same time, the Palestinians must use all the modern techniques of information and learn that propaganda is not just saying what rushes to your mind. If you build a bridge, you send for technicians, etc... When you carry out propaganda, you should go to those who know how to carry it out in terms of the mentality of the people you're addressing. This is what the Arabs have never done, and the Palestinians aren't much better in this. You don't say something to please yourself; you have to say something that will influence the people you are addressing...

I call all the Arabs my cousins, but the Palestinians are my first cousins. This is the way I feel about the subject, because your cause is my cause. I have given virtually my whole life to fighting Zionism, but you can't just fight Zionism in a vacuum. You have to be for something as well as against something. I am against Zionism, and I am for the rights of the Palestinians, and they go together. Anything that happens to the Palestinian cause affects me. When the tragedy of Beirut unfolded, it was as if I was in Beirut suffering. I actually wished that I had been there.

Uri Davis
Democratic Alternative

The following is translated from the interview we conducted in Arabic with Uri Davis. Uri Davis is known for having spoken out and written against Zionism and the state of 'Israel', as in his well -researched book, *Israel: Utopia Incorporated.* He has been active in promoting discussion with Palestinians and other anti - Zionist Jews concerning the concept of a democratic, secular, socialist state in Palestine.

Would you introduce yourself to our readers?

I am a Palestinian Jew who bears Israeli citizenship. I was born and raised in the Israeli state in the political, social and cultural setting of Zionism. Through the transformation of my thoughts and consciousness, I arrived at an anti - Zionist position in theory and practice. I am against the Zionist solution for the problem of anti - Semitism in the West. The alternative to the Israeli state is the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state, which is the most proper solution to the Palestinian cause.

How and why did you become anti - Zionist?

Every Jew born in Israel is born into a Zionist society...This does not necessarily mean that all individuals support all the Zionist formula. However, the Zionist movement concentrates on implanting the belief that the only solution to anti - Semitism is the establishment of a Jewish state and the immigration of world Jewry to this state; and that anti - Semitism is something inherited by all humans other than Jews. According to the Zionist formula, Jews cannot have complete and equal rights in a non - Jewish society.

The most essential feature of Zionism is that it is hypocritical. On the one hand, the Zionist movement presented itself as a democratic liberation movement through the schools, families and the press. On the other hand, it was important to form the Zionist society it wanted. So we lived in a society suffering from a double standard: the liberation standard, that all people have equal rights, and the Zionist standard, which does not give equal or human rights to non Jews. This double standard causes us to live in a crisis.

Facing this fact, we have two choices: One is to choose Zionism, condition ourselves to it and join the Zionist parties. The other choice is to discover the history of Palestine and Israel. In most cases, but not all, this leads one to a position similar to the one crystallized by the Palestinian resistance movement over the last fifteen years of struggle, concerning the subject of democratic Palestine.

However, I must emphasize that not all anti-Zionist Jews have arrived at a stand similar to mine. Take, for example, the strong stand of Rakah, the Israeli Communist Party, calling for the establishment of two states: a Jewish and an Arab one. This contains a lot of contradictions, for if the United Nations resolutions were to be implemented, including those on partition and the return of the refugees, Israel could not continue. The Rakah position, through adherence to the Soviet line, to Security Council resolution 242, partition and the return of the refugees, while at the same time to preserving the state of Israel, is impossible and does not hold up in any discussion.
impossible and does not hold up in any discussion.

There are important parties, like Matzpen, and the Sons of the Village movement, which reject the two states idea and support the alternative of a

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democratic state. I do not oppose the strategy of stages - if your aim is the establishment of a democratic state in Palestine, you have to follow the policy of stages - on the condition that you don't lie to the world, or to the Jewish public in Israel. You should say the truth: that the independent Palestinian state is only the first stage in liberating Palestine, and not as Uri Avneri and the Israeli - Palestinian Peace Council say, that this is the first and last stage. The last stage in establishing a democratic Palestinian state is when the Palestinian Jew and Arab enjoy the same rights under Palestinian law. The different cultures and social backgrounds of Jews and Arabs do not prevent living together in a united Palestine. Yugoslavia is a contemporary example. If we are to use the Arabic terminology: *watan* (homeland) and *quomia* (nationality), there is only one homeland, that is the Palestinian homeland, but there are two nationalities, the Arab and the Jewish Israeli.

How do you define nationality in scientific terms?

The terminology of nationalism is not precise. In short, it is a consensus, but that is difficult to define in a scientific or objective way...In the case of the Israeli Jewish people, an important development can be indicated, adding to that the common Hebrew language and the common land. We can therefore say that through the process of Zionist colonization in Palestine, an Israeli Jewish nation was formed. Of course, this does not mean that it is necessary to have an independent state.

I agree with you regarding the strategic solution, but not that there is an Israeli Jewish nation. It is hard to see that thirty years is enough to create a nation...

We do not differ on this subject, but there are some difficulties from which the Zionist propaganda is benefiting. There are contradictions between the political program of the PLO and the Palestinian National Charter. The Charter states that the Jews who were in Palestine before the Zionist invasion of 1917 to 1948 and their children are the ones considered Palestinian. I think it is very important to correct this part of the Charter, so that when the time of victory comes to the Palestinians, every Israeli Jew who is living in Palestine is considered not as a settler or occupier, but as a citizen who is entitled to equal rights.

If we agree on this subject, then I will not discuss whether there is or is not an Israeli nation. If the Palestinian revolution gives assurances that all Israeli Jews have equal rights in Palestine; if the Palestinian revolution will not ask any Jew in Palestine to return to Europe or the US; if the Palestinian law guarantees equal rights to all, then we will not differ on whether Israeli Jews are a nation or a (religious) sect.

How can we establish this democratic state?

The PLO is the framework with which the resistance movement is affiliated. It is struggling on all necessary levels: diplomatic, political and military. We will build a democratic Palestine by all possible means. The relative importance of these levels varies according to the specific situation. At each stage, you have to emphasize one level. At this stage, I believe the most important is the military. The preferable way to put us on the path to a democratic Palestine is to further the armed struggle in all of Palestine. The peace movement is relatively strong now in Israel because there are Israeli soldiers dying weekly. If the same thing were happening in the West Bank and Tel Aviv, then I am certain that internal changes in Israel would be the same as we now witness vis-a-vis the war in Lebanon.

I think the PLO should at this stage open its membership to the Israeli Jews who are anti-Zionist. If the PLO officially declared that this is possible for anti-Zionist Israeli Jews, who support the political program of the PLO, this would have a huge effect on the Israeli society. However, this should not be an alternative to armed struggle.

What about the role of anti-Zionist, democratic Jews?

The position of the anti-Zionist Jews living in the Israeli society is similar to that of whites, who are opposed to apartheid, living in South Africa where the majority of whites support racist discrimination. Anti-Zionists are a minority. You cannot move to recruit them as if you were working in a (Palestinian refugee) camp. On our part, we have destroyed the Zionist moral: we were raised in a Jewish society; then we raised our voices to the world saying that Zionism is not a solution to anti-Semitism; we are Jews born in a Jewish society, Israeli, but we reject it. In my view, the influence of this moral statement is great.

How do you view the peace movement and other anti-war organizations in 'Israel'?

The emergence of the peace movement and other anti-war organizations has great importance, but I term this a negative importance in the sense that these movements put a limit to the government's freedom to maneuver. It merely wants withdrawal of the Israeli army from Lebanon. The influence of the peace movement is largely due to the heroic struggle of the Palestinian and Lebanese fighters, but the question remains on this level... Half a million Israelis demonstrated against the massacre of Sabra and Shatila, but not even one percent of those who demonstrated is ready to accept, or invite, the survivors of Sabra and Shatila to live with them as neighbors in Tel Aviv.

How do you evaluate the resignation of Begin?

I believe Shafiq al Hout (of the PLO) gave the best commentary - that Begin was the most recent Israeli casualty in Lebanon, but not the last one. In my opinion, it is necessary to see the structural change in the Israeli leadership. Until 1977, all Israeli leaders came from the Zionist Labor Party. In 1977, the Zionist Revisionists came to power. Before 1977, the leadership was from the Haganah; then it passed to the leaders of the Irgun, which was led by Begin; then Shamir inherited the leadership from Begin. Shamir comes from the Stern and LEHI organizations. I see in this continued replacement an expression of the weakness of Israeli political strategy. I believe we will face a dangerous stage in the near future. The Begin, Sharon, Eitan triumvirate wanted to correct the defeat of 1973 with their invasion of Lebanon. It is clear that they have failed. I don't have the least doubt that the Shamir leadership will organize another barbaric attack to correct the 1982 defeat, and again I have no doubt that it will fail. It will be more bloody than Lebanon, but it cannot succeed. I believe it is our responsibility to warn public opinion in Israel and abroad of what could happen, and to prepare ourselves to face this horrifying possibility.

What about the future?

I was born in 1943, and if I live to be seventy, my life span will be longer than that of the Israeli state.

Nuclear Threat Escalated

Like the US's invasion of Grenada, its military intervention in Lebanon and the new accord with the Zionist state, the installation of cruise and Pershing II missiles in western Europe confirms that imperialism has chosen the war path. The decision to begin this deployment, despite broad popular opposition and the qualms of even some bourgeois circles, is not due to a Soviet "threat" or to weakened western defense. Rather it is a result of the depth of imperialism's crisis, and the fact that the most retrograde strata of the international bourgeoisie has taken the helm; this strata sees the military option as the primary means for resolving the crisis.

The installation appears to signal the end of the four-year period which began with NATO's 1979 decision to deploy the US nuclear missiles, if the US and Soviet Union could not reach a prior arms limitations agreement. Actually, it signals the beginning of a new stage in the arms race launched by US imperialism. It marks a qualitative and quantitative leap in the nuclear arsenal aimed at the socialist community, first and foremost the Soviet Union. It means a dramatic rise in the chances of nuclear war, which per definition cannot be limited, but will inevitably threaten all mankind, directly or indirectly. The population of Europe in particular has been thrust into a new state of existence, as hostages in imperialism's game of nuclear blackmail.

Quite literally, this is only the first step. In mid-November, as the first components of the missiles were being sneaked into Britain, West Germany and then Italy, the US Congress approved funding for the giant MX missile and for developing the Midgetman. While the MX is threatening in terms of its sheer size, one should not think that the label *Midgetman* denotes a weapon any less dangerous. On the contrary, its smaller size and being a single warhead missile, is to allow for the Midgetman being incorporated into a mobile storage system in order to insure *survivability*. The Reagan Administration, having succeeded in implanting new first strike nuclear weapons in Europe, is obsessed with developing the means for carrying on a nuclear war once it breaks out.

Sabotaged negotiations

Despite concerted Soviet attempts to engage in serious negotiations, it is not surprising that no agreement was reached to stop or delay the deployment. The installation of the missiles is not due to the break-down of arms control talks, much less to Soviet "intransigence", as portrayed by imperialist officials and media. It is a result of the Reagan Administration's rejection of nuclear parity, instead insisting on posing a threat to the Soviet Union, and the West European governments' commitment to the US plans via NATO.

Throughout, the Reagan Administration's tactics were based on the assumption that the Soviet Union would not be ready for an agreement, i.e., relinquishing parity and compromising its security, until missiles capable of reaching Soviet cities in a matter of minutes were firmly in place. US Defense Minister Weinberger and others opposed opening the negotiations until the Administration's military build-up program was well underway. With this assured, the "zero option" was launched late in 1981, solely to "put the Soviet on the defensive," as stated by Richard Perle, US Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy. Richard Burt, then director of the State Department's Politico-Military Affairs Bureau, was even more frank. In 1981, he told his staff, "The purpose of this whole exercise is maximum political advantage. It's not arms control we're engaged in, it's alliance (NATO) management." (*Time* magazine, December 5, 1983). For US imperialism, the question has never been whether or not to deploy the missiles, but how to handle the political effects vis-a-vis its European allies, who were faced with massive opposition on the question.

Protest at Greenham Commons.

The Soviet Union, however, did not fall for imperialism's blackmail. In the context of the sharpened global contradiction between imperialism and socialism, only nuclear parity can deter imperialism from using its nuclear arsenal as a threat to enforce its will, or in actual warfare. Accordingly, the Soviet Union found it necessary to announce plans for increasing the defense of the socialist community by stationing, for the first time, tactical nuclear missiles in Czechoslovakia and Democratic Germany.

Challenging the anti-war movement

The beginning of the deployment contains certain lessons which must be used by the anti-nuclear movement in rising to the challenge of the new stage. The first concerns the connection between the imperialist bourgeoisie's domestic and foreign policies. The determination of the Reagan, Thatcher and Kohl governments in particular to push through the deployment exhibits the same quality as their domestic austerity programs: blatant disregard for the welfare and wishes of the majority of the people, even in their own country. This goes hand in hand with increased deceit on the part of the top echelons, as exhibited by Thatcher's refusal to tell the House of Commons under what circumstances she and Reagan might decide to use the British-based cruises.

More limits on democratic rights are also part of the nuclear missile package. Increased internal repression has been a prominent characteristic of many capitalist states in the last decade, and this will only increase with the nuclear militarization of Europe. Already, hundreds have been arrested, especially in Britain and West Germany, for demonstrating against the missile deployment. One reported incident in Britain is probably no exception: In Birmingham, the Special Branch (of the police) normally concerned with combatting subversion, investigated a local peace group engaged in such activities as writing letters to newspapers against the missile deployment. Most blatantly, English Defense Secretary, Heseltine,

told parliament that under certain circumstances women demonstrators might be shot if they get too close to the nuclear installations. This is the imperialist bourgeoisie's response to the persistent, but peaceful opposition of the women at Greenham Commons.

We cite these examples to show that the internal effects of the missile deployment can help the peace movement to become even stronger by linking its cause with that of other movements fighting political, social and economic injustice. This could be the basis for broader anti-imperialist coalitions in the capitalist countries, and for increased international solidarity. The fact that the cruise missiles now stationed in Sicily can reach the Middle East only underscores that imperialism's nuclear offensive is part of its global aggressiveness against the people. Realizing this fact can bolster the political platform of the anti-war movement, strengthen its anti-imperialist content, and in turn broaden support to the liberation movements fighting imperialism's aggression on the three continents.

See PFLP Bulletin no. 66 (Spring 1983) for a background article on "Imperialism's Nuclear Threat." ●

Visit to French Communist Party

On the invitation of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of France, a PFLP delegation headed by Comrade Adbel Raheem Malouh, Politbureau member, visited Paris. There a series of important discussions were held in the Communist Party Central Committee headquarters, attended by Comrade Jacques Dineau, member of the Central Committee, and Comrade Alain Gresh, responsible for Arab affairs. In the discussions, the French comrades emphasized the Communist Party's deep conviction that the Palestinian problem is the essence of the Middle East conflict. They further stressed the right of the Palestinian people to national independence and the establishment of an independent state.

Both sides concurred on the necessity of preserving the PLO's unity and independence, guaranteeing its nationalist political line, and maintaining its gains and active role. In this context, the Communist Party of France highly evaluated the distinguished role of the PFLP in the Palestinian and Arab arenas, as well as the steps towards unity with the DFLP, as a means for strengthening the role of the left. For its part, the PFLP delegation praised the important role of the Communist Party of France in supporting the Palestinian people's struggle and the PLO, as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Both sides agreed on the importance of the role of the Lebanese nationalist forces in confronting fascism, Israeli occupation and US aggression. They emphasized the necessity of support to the Lebanese nationalist forces in the struggle for the unity, independence, national identity and democratic development of Lebanon. There was mutual agreement on strengthening the relations between the Communist Party of France and the PFLP. ●

CPUSA Convention

The struggle against anti-Semitism is not complete without struggle against Zionism.

The Communist Party of the USA held its 23rd National Convention in Cleveland, Ohio, November 10-13th. The convention was composed of 500 delegates from 48 states. It was also attended by guest delegations, among which the PFLP was honored to be invited. Though the US government's refusal of visas blocked some foreign delegations, there were representatives at the convention from communist parties of both western and eastern Europe. Comrade Gus Hall, General Secretary of the CPUSA, opened his presentation of the Main Report by welcoming "our honored guests from other lands who have successfully broken through the Reagan 'window of vulnerability'."

The main theme of the convention was expressed in the slogan: "Raising Our Sights: Towards a Mass Communist Party of Action." Convention documents analyzed the "triple layered economic crisis" and its effects on the US working class. Emphasis was placed on strengthening the unity of the "multiracial, multinational, male-female, young-old working class" in the US and, to this end, working for equality between all components of the labor force. Party cadre were urged to more actively assert the party's role and more closely link mass work and party building. Decisions were taken to invigorate the party's work at sites of industrial concentration and in campaigns to increase trade union membership, as well as to organize the growing ranks of the employed, moving them into the "Dump Reagan" campaign.

The decisiveness of the 1984 Presidential elections was highlighted in terms of the opportunity for stopping the Reagan war machine, reversing Reaganomics and stemming the tide of racism, etc. Correctly positing that neither the Democratic nor Republican party policies can resolve the crisis, the convention emphasized developing the growing mass opposition to the Reagan Administration's austerity and militarism. "The movements for political independence (from state monopoly capitalism's two old parties) have reached a level where there must be serious consideration given to running and electing candidates from the ranks of the different sectors of the anti-monopoly all-people's front". In this context, the convention evaluated the significance of Jesse Jackson's candidacy, yet determined that this does not negate the need for the CPUSA to field its own candidates.

Regarding international issues, the convention emphasized the struggle for peace in the face of the Reagan Administration's policies of nuclear threat, anti-communism and aggressive intervention. The danger of nuclear war was linked to the new level of undeclared US wars in Central America, South Africa and Lebanon.

The basic document noted, "In the Middle East, Israel continues its role as an imperialist power itself, as well as a heightened role as surrogate for US imperialism. Israel continues its genocidal warfare against the Palestinian people. US imperialism is establishing military bases in Egypt, Lebanon and the Sinai." Zionism's internal effects in the USA were also addressed: "Zionism, because it supports US imperialist policies and the expansionist and annexationist policies of the Begin government, is a divisive and negative influence in the Jewish community and works to divert Jewish Americans from their natural alliance with the working class and the all-people's front." A resolution adopted at the convention stipulated that the struggle against anti-Semitism cannot be complete without struggle against Zionism.

Medals of Steadfastness

In conjunction with the celebration of the Front's 16th anniversary, a ceremony was held in Yarmouk camp, where General Secretary, Comrade George Habash, awarded medals of steadfastness to PFLP militants who performed their duties in an exceptional manner in the 1982 confrontation of the Zionist enemy in Lebanon. All martyrs of the war were automatically awarded the medal, as were many comrades who were wounded in the confrontation.

HANDICRAFT EXHIBITION

On the occasion of the Front's 16th anniversary, the PFLP Women's Bureau arranged an exhibition of Palestinian handicraft and art, portraying national heritage and struggle. Various items were offered for sale to raise funds. The exhibition was held in the newly opened Women's Office in Yarmouk camp. At the same time, the Women's Bureau opened workshops in other camps of the Damascus area.

Anniversary Celebrations